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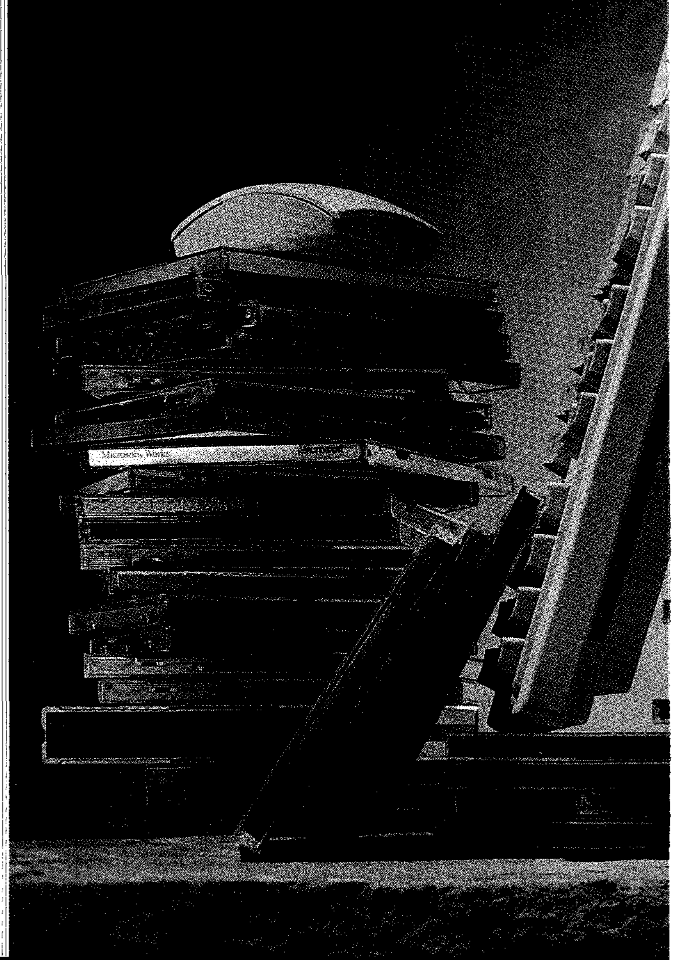

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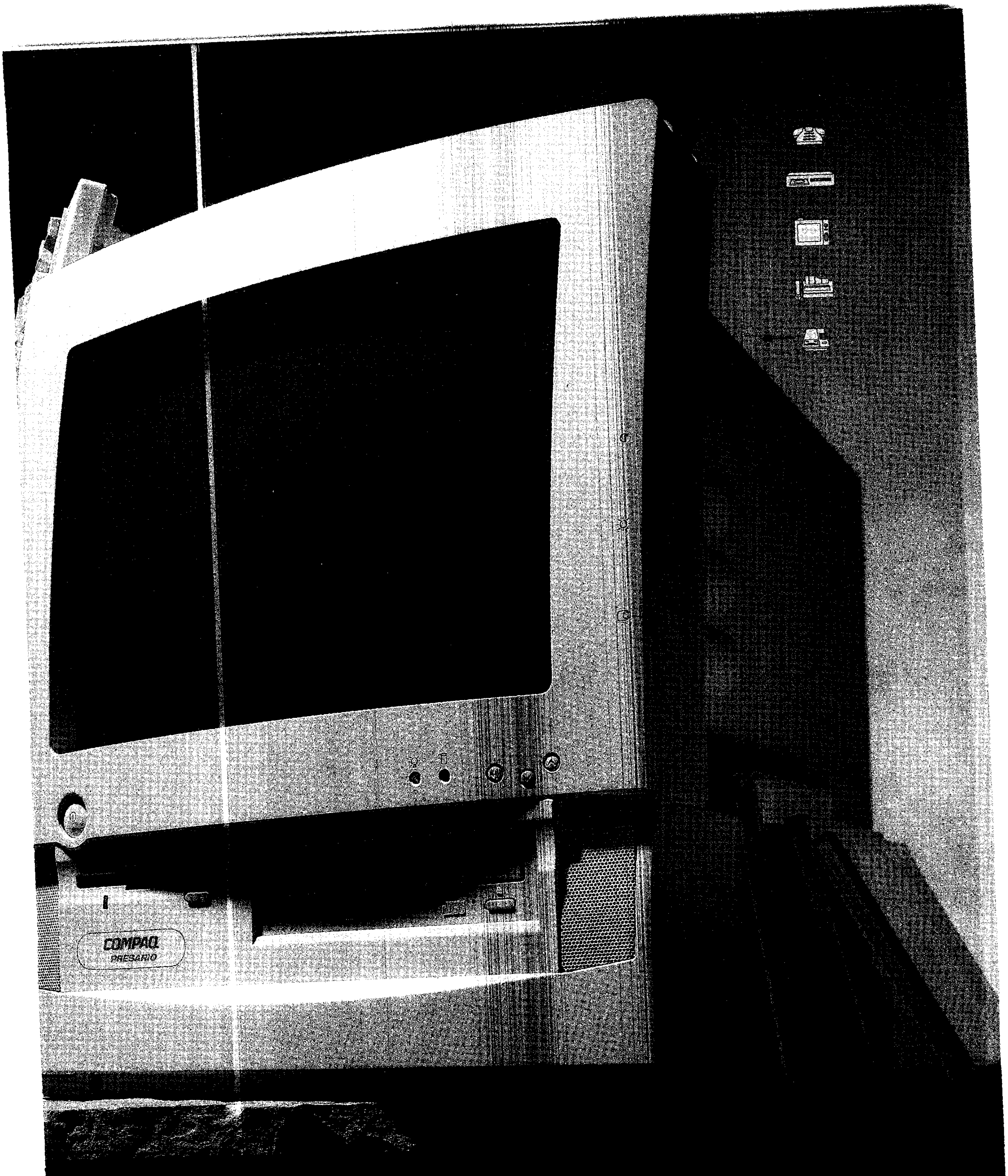

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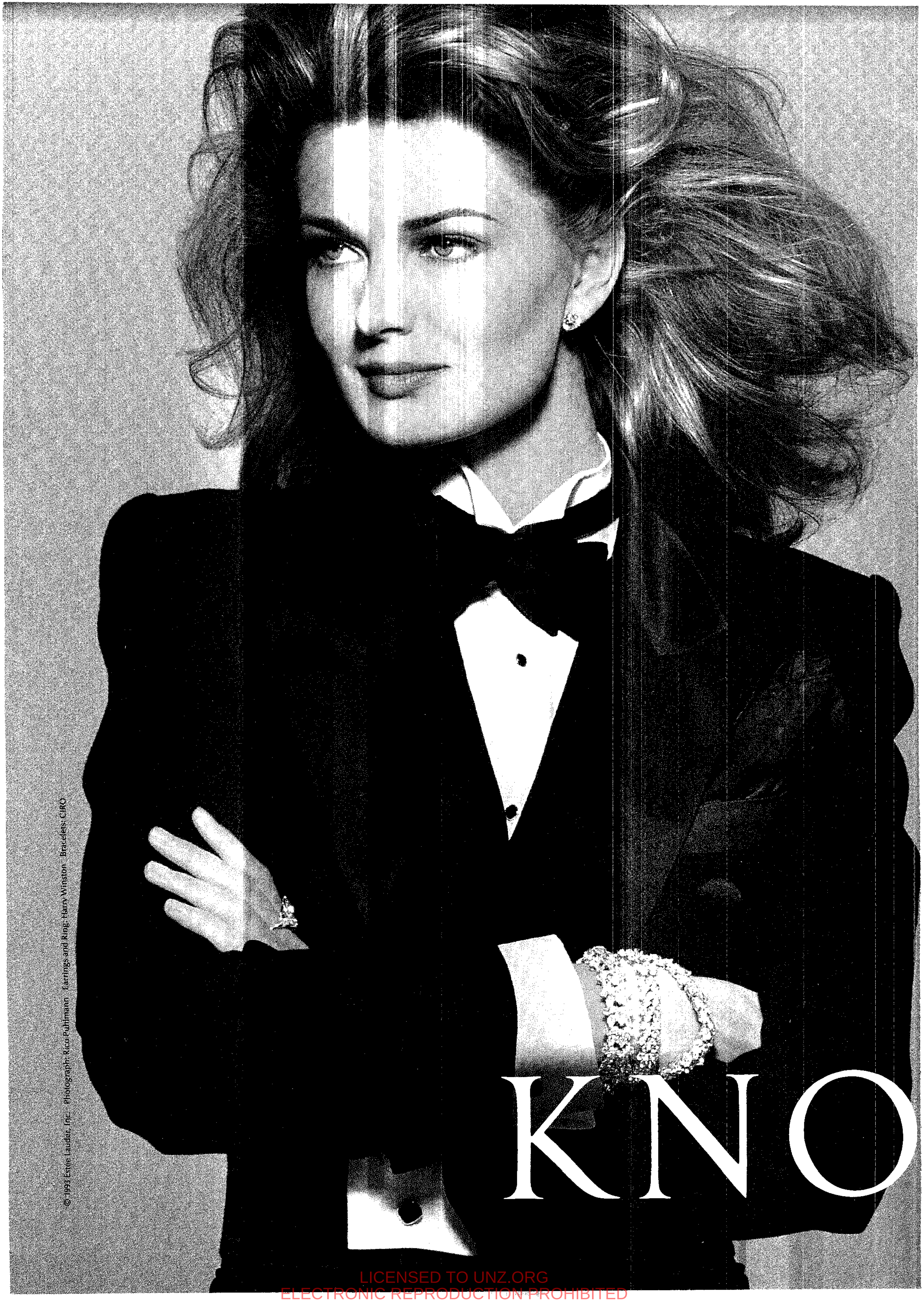

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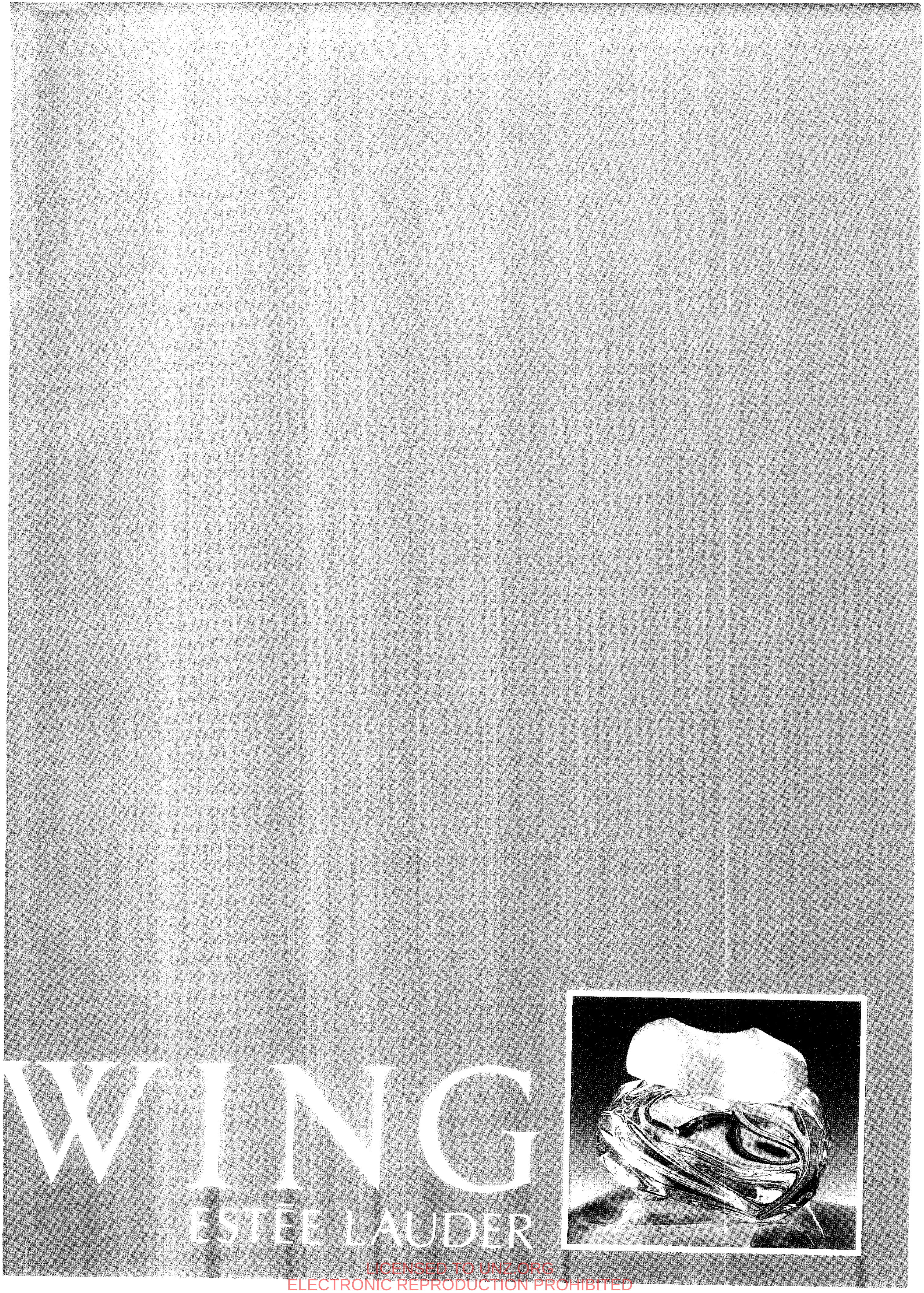
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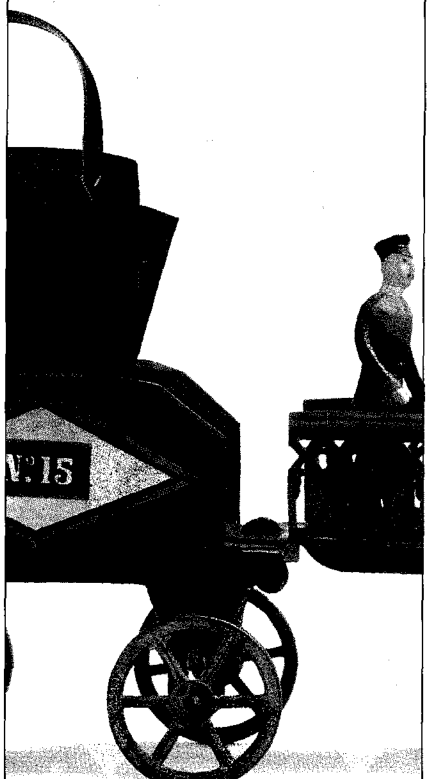

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THE NEW YORKER

OCTOBER 10, 1994

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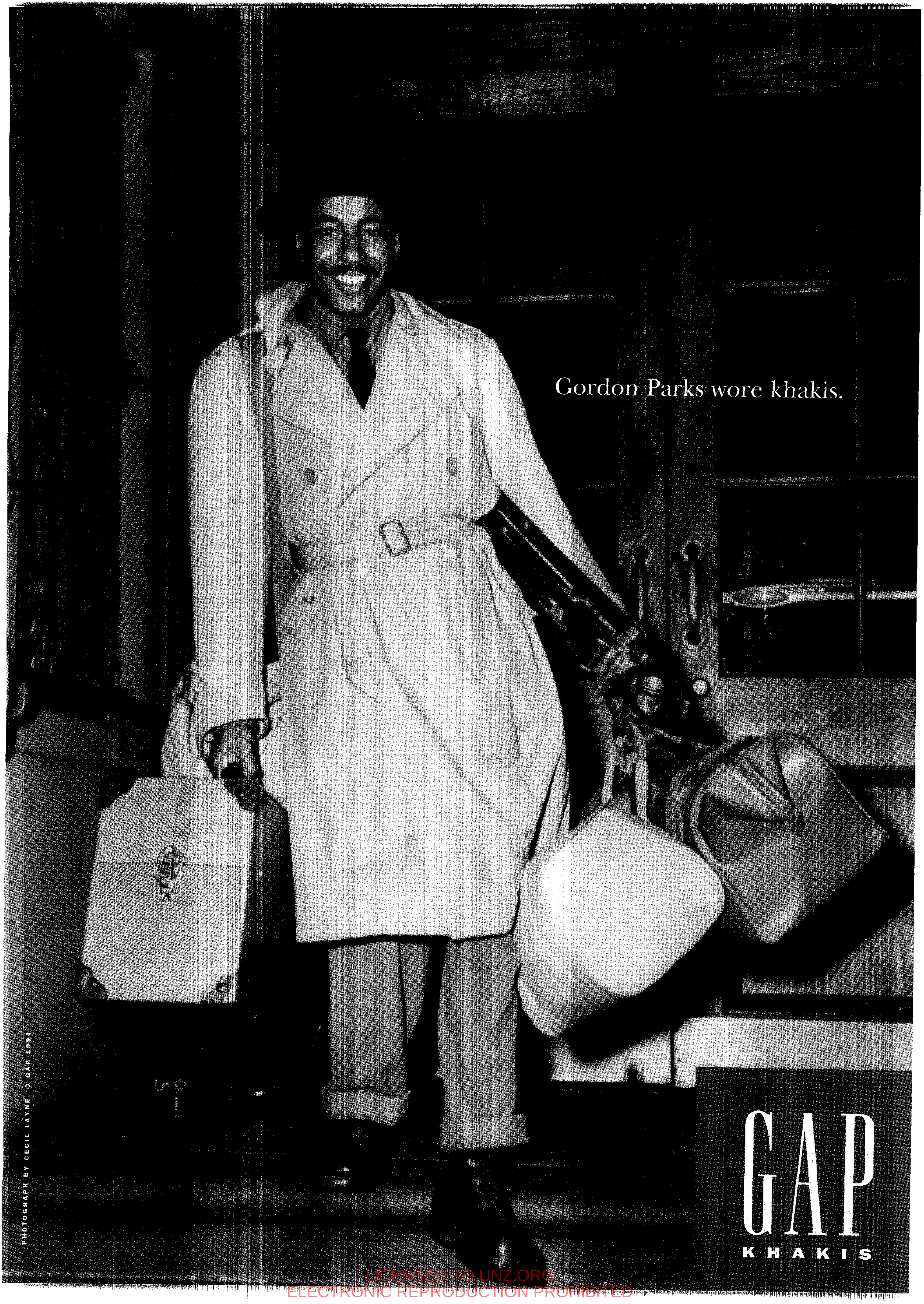
Gordon Parks wore khakis.
GAP
KHAKIS

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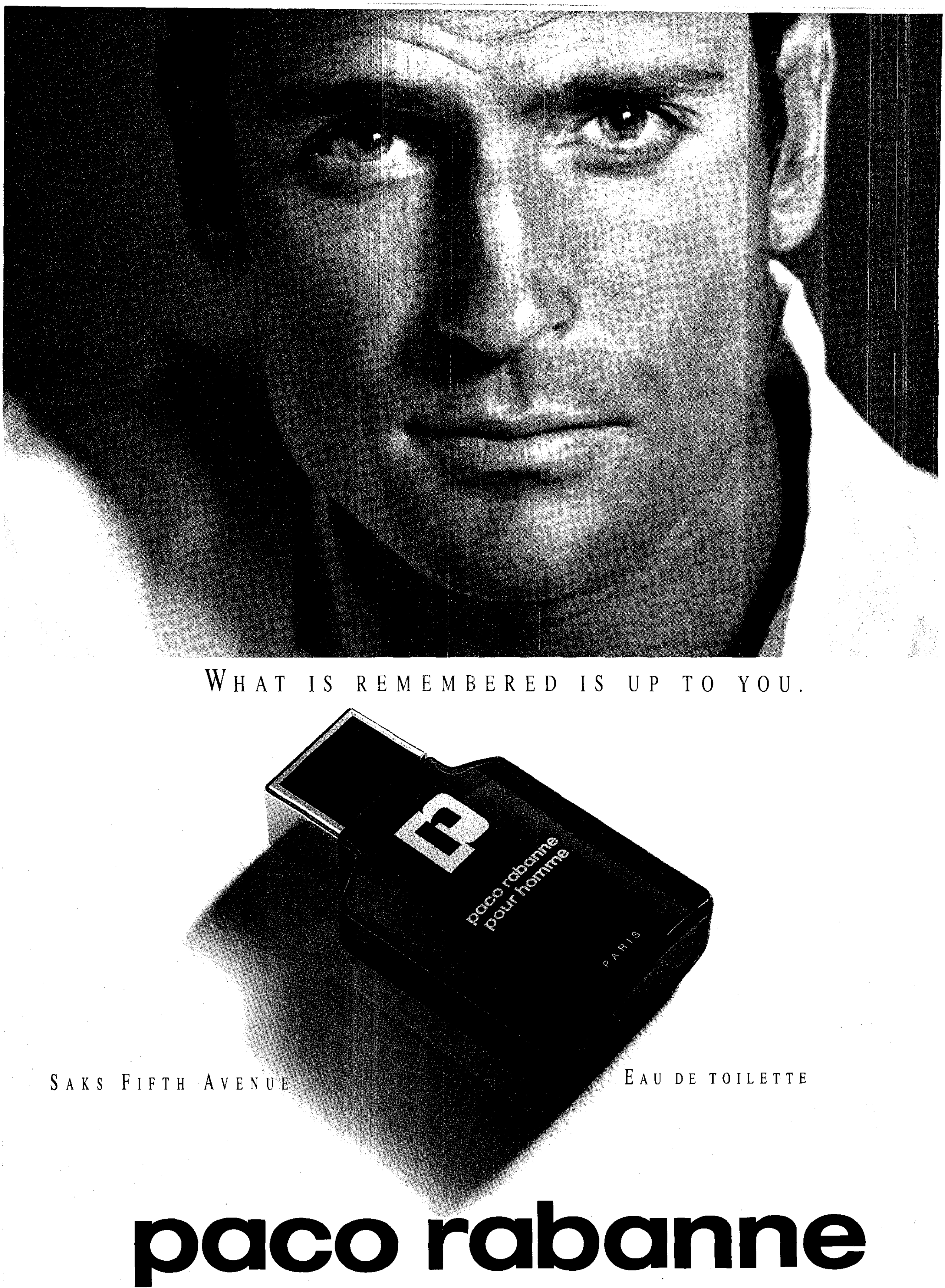
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COMMENT

WRITERS' BLOC

East Europe's press faces a threat it thought was history.

On September 15th, by a three-to-one margin, the Sejm, the lower house of Poland's parliament, passed a bill providing up to ten years in prison for anyone disclosing an official secret. And an official secret can be whatever a government clerk says it is—in seventy-one different categories. If the upper house passes the bill this month and President Lech Walesa signs it, bureaucrats will be free to declare the publication of anything from the population of Gdansk to a report of a coming kielbasa shortage a punishable offense.

The passage of that law in Poland, which currently enjoys the freest and most sophisticated press in the former Soviet bloc, would be a calamity but not a surprising calamity. From Hungary to Uzbekistan, governments have enacted laws authorizing prior censorship, classifying routine information as official secrets, and granting public officials such comprehensive protection against "defamation" that in some countries debate about government policy has been muted to the point of silence. These laws, almost comically vague, hand the authorities a weapon usable against any critic. Many governments did not even have to start from scratch: they simply revived laws the Communists had used to jail dissenters, sometimes increasing the prison terms.

Some of Europe's most celebrated champions of free speech have drifted into helping to circumscribe it. In Warsaw last year, President Walesa allowed police to beat up anti-Walesa demonstrators outside his office. Polish journalists have been jailed for attacking politicians in print; the author of an article in a provincial newspaper served two and a half months for calling local Solidarity leaders "dopes" and "small-time politicos and careerists." In Prague last November, the parliament renewed two Communist-era statutes outlawing defamation of public officials and institutions—the same statutes under which a playwright named Václav Havel was imprisoned fifteen years ago. Mr. Havel, now the President of the Czech Republic, asked his country's new Constitutional Court to review one of the laws, and the court struck down its most noxious provisions. He did not appeal the second law, which protects—well, the President of the Czech Republic. It was quickly used against his bête noire, an editor-

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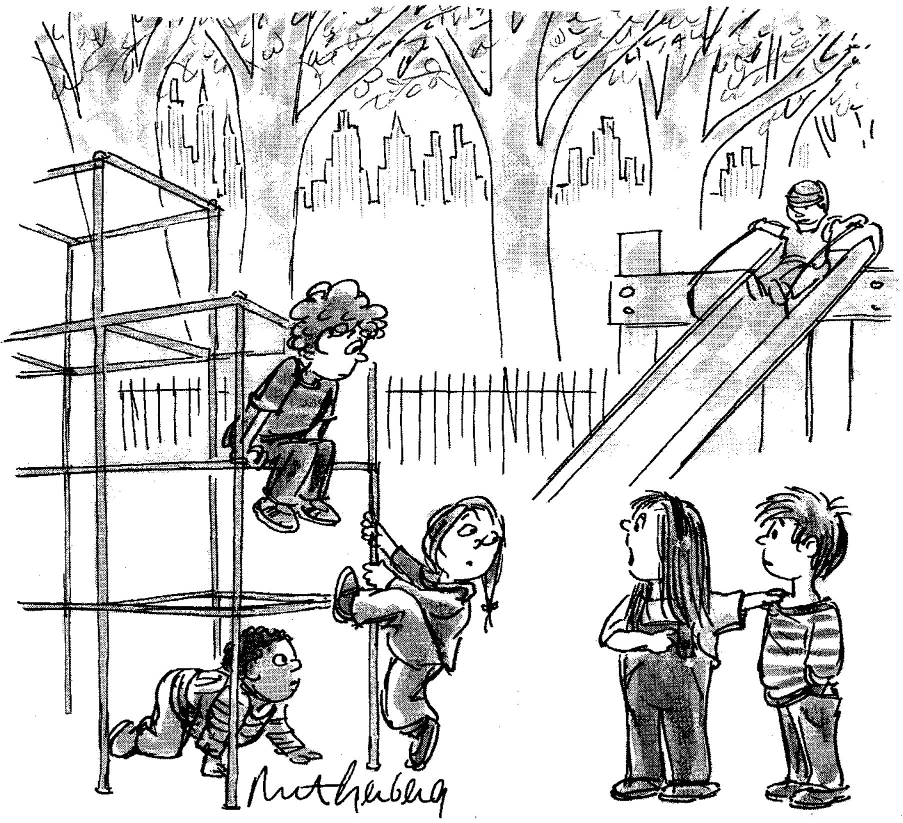
publisher named Petr Cibulka, whose stock in trade is the notion that Mr. Havel (along with thousands of other innocent people) was an informer for the Communist secret police. Cibulka was charged with defaming the President by calling him a "pig" and a "brute." Mr. Havel pardoned him, but the law remains in effect.

One treads carefully in reproaching Václav Havel on human-rights grounds. But such laws are more dangerous than any journalist, even a fantasist and ranter like Cibulka. And, while pardons are better than no pardons, they do nothing to dispel—indeed, they strengthen—the persistent popular belief that the freedom of the press exists at the sufferance of the state.

Despite the defamation laws, the press in Poland and the Czech Republic is, for the moment, largely free. But Poland's proposed secrets act is a warning that these countries could easily come to resemble their less enlightened East European brethren. Slovakia's constitution lists broad categories of permitted censorship, including protection of "law and order" and "morality." The Romanian senate recently passed a bill increasing penalties for "insult" to public officials; if the lower house passes it this fall, a reporter who pursues even the most basic kind of investigative information—evidence that a policeman is on the take, for example—will risk seven years' imprisonment. (It won't matter if the information is accurate; truth will not be a permitted defense.) Last November, the Albanian government, controlled by the increasingly misnamed Democratic Party, enacted a law almost identical to the one that Romania is considering. Since then, two reporters have been arrested and a handful of others beaten or harassed. But numerous arrests are unnecessary; news organizations, which had decades of practice in self-censorship, are again heading off trouble by firing even the mildest provocateurs. Albanian television dismissed a journalist who reported that farmers were letting their cows wander onto the runway of the country's main airport.

West European governments have inadvertently encouraged the authoritarian trend by advocating the adoption of press laws like those that have long been traditional in their own countries. Albania's press law is a virtual copy of that of the German province of North Rhine–Westphalia; the text was provided to Albania by the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, the highly respected international arm of the German Social Democratic Party. And the Council of Europe has urged East European states to enact press laws, thinking that in their absence governments would bully journalists into one-sided subservience. In the West, however, independent courts and strong democratic traditions guard against the abuse of such laws. (Britain's Official Secrets Act is a deplorable exception.) The official secrets protected in Westphalia are clearly and narrowly defined in the German Basic Law. The ones protected in the East are defined either impossibly broadly or, as in Albania, not at all—it's the bureaucracy's call. The Westphalian law punishes defamation, but the German courts have made it clear that defaming a public official requires a more strenuous effort than defaming an ordinary citizen. East Europe stands this on its head: the more powerful the person, the more protection he gets.



"This is my friend Robert Shapiro, except he's not the real Robert Shapiro."

Another justification offered by defenders of the new laws is the irresponsibility of the press; and there's no denying that many papers in East Europe are simply party organs stuffed with fawning interviews with friendly politicians and unsubtle insinuations that opponents serve some sinister foreign interest. It is also argued—paradoxically—that the very fragility of democratic rights and institutions justifies censorship: Communists are using the free speech they denied to others to destabilize democratic governments, and controls, therefore, are necessary to prevent a return to dictatorship.

It's debatable how real these dangers are. The remedy prescribed for them, however, is provably toxic. East Europe's totalitarian nightmare is surely as dead as the ideology that animated it, but there are many varieties of unfreedom, and the milder ones are hardly to be recommended simply because they fall short of the Stalinist prototype. The impulse to control the press is a natural hangover from the old days. Even dissidents couldn't help absorbing some of the pathologies of a system that announced election results in advance and lied about the weather. Today's public officials spent their lives in societies where the leader's word was law and independent institutions were scarce; criticism was tantamount to treason, and honest dissent was an oxymoron. This situation is not altogether disagreeable to those who hold power, and they are understandably reluctant to give it away. They feel little pressure to do so from their own citizens, most of whom regard a docile press as normal, and so far their censorship has cost them virtually nothing in the West. It ought to cost them more.

—TINA ROSENBERG

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IN THE MAIL

THE CITADEL

I hardly recognized the picture of The Citadel that Susan Faludi painted ("The Naked Citadel," September 5th). The article leads one to ask, "Why on earth would anybody want to go there—especially Shannon Faulkner?" I spent four years there in the early seventies, would do so again, and support Shannon Faulkner's admission to the Corps. The education that I received at The Citadel provided a solid foundation for a successful career in diplomacy. But I could have received that foundation just about anywhere. What made the Citadel education so valuable to me and to the generations of other men who have earned it was the sound lessons in discipline, honor, fortitude, justice, loyalty, and duty, which provide the building blocks of character. Those lessons are learned not only in the classroom but in the barracks, on the athletic fields, and on the parade ground.

THOMAS E. TORRANCE
Arlington, Va.

As a graduate of The Citadel, I feel compelled to dispel the popular myth that its mission is to take impressionable young men and turn them into homophobic, violent racists and anti-feminists. Ms. Faludi's references to the uniforms' being akin to high-school-band uniforms and to the "hokeyness" of the "props" surrounding the parade ground disparage what the school has accomplished all these years and the graduates who have given their lives defending this country. Would Ms. Faludi personally prefer that we march with live weapons? Would it be relevant if we had more up-to-date military artifacts adorning the parade ground? Her delving into the drag scene in Charleston left my head spinning. What possible bearing does that have on The Citadel? It appears that Ms. Faludi was doing everything within her power to discredit the school.

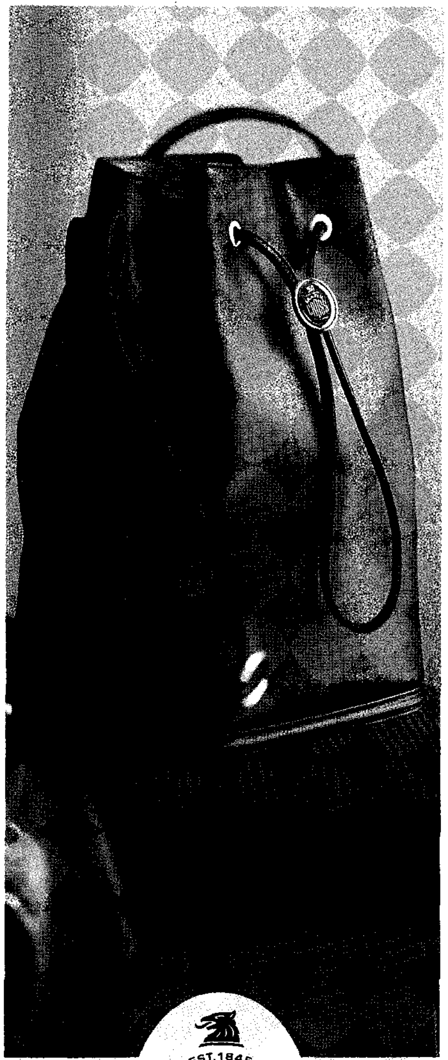
RICHARD J. MILLER
Fairfield, Conn.

I am amazed and shocked that the young lady who sat in my English class last spring with such willingness and eagerness to learn about cadet life has managed to misrepresent the Corps of Cadets. The Citadel, like every college, has had its fair share of controversy and problems over the years, and the article makes some valuable observations concerning discipline and the rigors of the fourth-class system and its abuses. But instead of focussing on what The Citadel produces and the contributions it has made to South Carolina, the nation, and the world, the article addresses the alternative life styles of a few cadets. You have joined the ranks of *Sports Illustrated* in stereotyping Citadel cadets as brutal and vicious, and you have further stereotyped them as homosexual drag-queen daters. I cannot help wondering if your author would have made it big had she reported something positive and good-natured.

CADET CALDWELL WARLEY
The Citadel
Charleston, S.C.

I, for one, am willing to accept the accuracy of Susan Faludi's unflattering portrayal of The Citadel. She may be correct in saying that most, if not all, of the graduates (including me) never seem to grow out of the institutional dementia that four miserable years of binding wool uniforms can afford. Well into our mid-life, we ignore our never-forgotten pain, and subject our sons to the same abuse. We offer them up to The Citadel as sacrifices while remaining terrified of our own latent homosexuality.

So what? Ms. Faludi obviously doesn't



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understand The Citadel, and I can't explain it—it's one of those Southern-men things, like pickup trucks and bass window stickers. And where is it written that Ms. Faludi and the well-meaning legion of Citadel detractors have to understand it? In fact, the only thing that bothered me about the article was that members of the Citadel family felt it necessary to attempt to explain to this inexplicably angry woman why they wish to retain their hundred-and-fifty-year-old traditions.

The Supreme Court may ultimately order The Citadel to admit Ms. Faulkner. That will be a sad day for reasons Ms. Faludi and Ms. Faulkner will never, never understand, and for that I feel sorry for them. The need to make everything equal will ultimately make everything the same. I question whether society will find that to be an improvement.

John O'Dowd
Fort Collins, Colo.

A 1950 graduate of the United States Naval Academy and a member of its faculty from 1966 to 1970, I believe that the hazing I endured and observed there did far more harm than good. We were being trained or training men to be leaders of the Navy's enlisted men. The newly commissioned Naval Academy graduate soon found out that he could not treat proud and competent American sailors the way he had been allowed and encouraged to treat plebes. He would have had something of a head start if he'd been practicing on plebes the same kind of leadership he'd have to exercise after he graduated. The Citadel, it seems, has taken this hazing about six steps further than our service academies. And, not being a sadist, I can't imagine a valid reason for any of it. Such hazing has no place in *any* system that purports to be educational, let alone one whose aim is to teach its students modern American military discipline.

Richard E. Goodspeed
Hurst, Texas

The Citadel purports to be a molder of the "whole man," a place where tomorrow's leaders are being formed, and it is turning out spoon-fed, misogynistic clones into the waiting business world, where women hold places all along the power structure. How are these sheltered toy soldiers going to fit in? When asked why female cadets would pose a problem on campus, one cadet spoke of the humiliation the cadets would feel if women observed their on-campus activities. What is going to happen when these young men get out in the real world and are working alongside—or, God forbid, for—a woman?

Joseph R. Camoosa
Atlanta, Ga.

I must take issue with Susan Faludi when she asks, "What brought a young man to an all-male preserve in the last decade of the twentieth century, anyway?" It may have been the same thing that kept me, naïvely, at a women's college between 1982 and 1985: ideals of equality, individuality, assertiveness without violence, learning in preference to competition, and, most important, the positive role models provided. How disappointed the freshmen at The Citadel must be. The problem is not that their school wants to hold on to its policy of excluding women. The problem is what the school does to all those men.

MaryAnn Duffy
Bronxville, N.Y.

Three hundred men disrobe each other, set fire to the discarded clothes, and then wrestle on the ground. A man is "stripped, tied to a chair, and covered with shaving cream, while his groin is coated in liquid shoe polish." If these were the actions of performance artists benefitting from N.E.A. largesse, the self-appointed defenders of American morality would bellow their outrage. Since the participants in these psychosexually freighted (and publicly funded) antics are, on the contrary, Citadel cadets, the Jesse Helmses and Rush Limbaughs of the world remain oddly approving.

Go figure.

Mark Eckenwiler
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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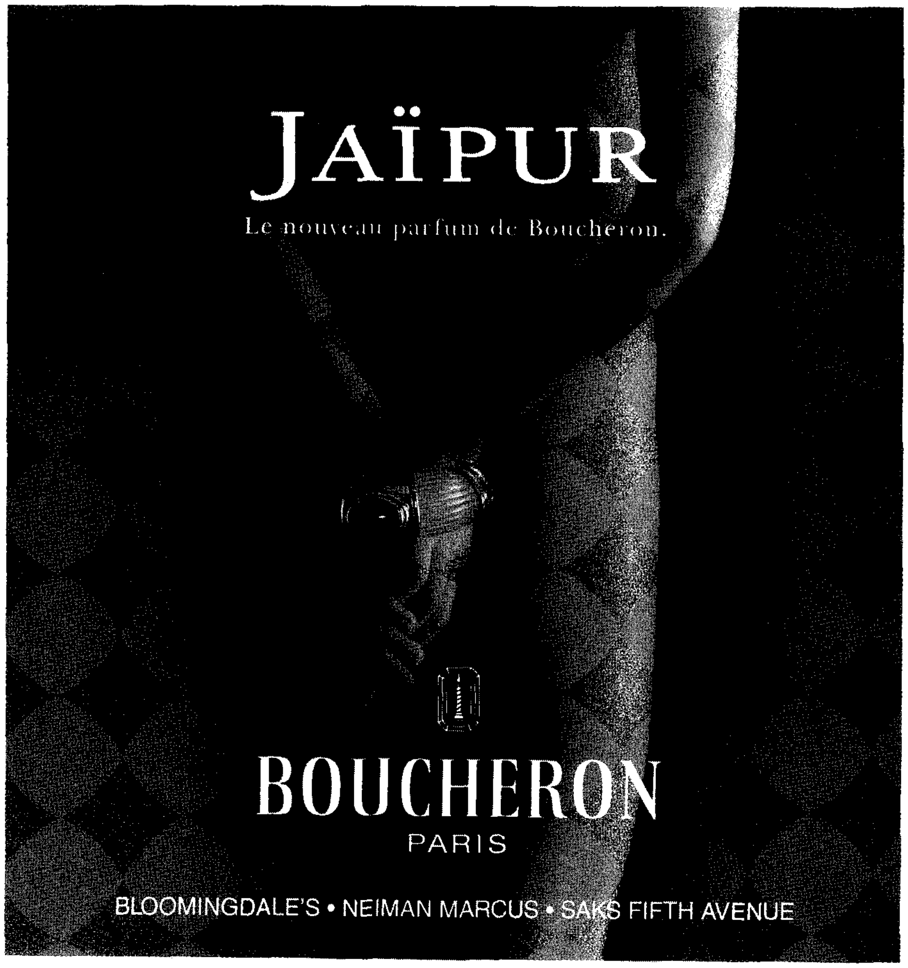
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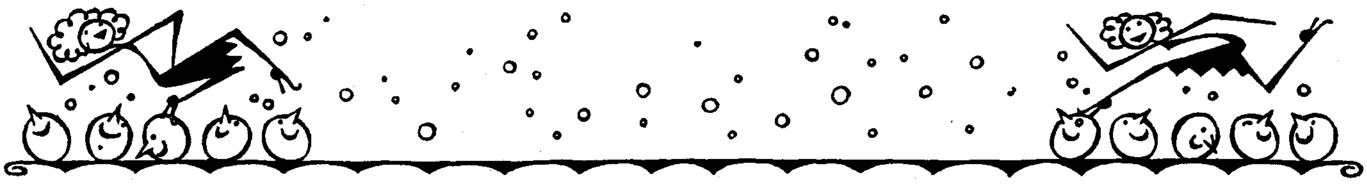

GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

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THE THEATRE

Upstarts

ONE of the goals of the Young Playwrights Festival, now in its thirteenth year, is to give writers eighteen and younger the experience of having their plays produced professionally. That process, as this year's three winners readily attest, is not without surprises. Madeleine George, a linguistics major at Cornell, is the author of "The Most Massive Woman Wins." "My play is about fat females," Ms. George said. "I couldn't believe how many actresses came up to me during the audition process and said, 'You have no idea how few roles are written for overweight people. Thank you!'" Nadine Graham, the author of an apocalyptic comedy called "The Basement at the Bottom at the End of the World," had an unexpectedly tough time during the auditions for her main character. "None of the actresses who read the part seemed to get her," Ms. Graham said. "I thought we'd never finish casting." (They finally found a suitable young performer named Amber Kane.) Jerome D. Hairston, whose contribution is a drama of desperation titled "The Love of Bullets," survived a change of directors halfway through rehearsals. "It took time to adjust, but I learned a lot," he said. "And now my play is about to go on at the Public Theatre, which is run by one of my heroes, George Wolfe. What can I say?" Nothing more, perhaps, except that Wolfe's theatre, to which the festival has moved after nine years at Playwrights Horizons, will present the three plays through October 29.

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

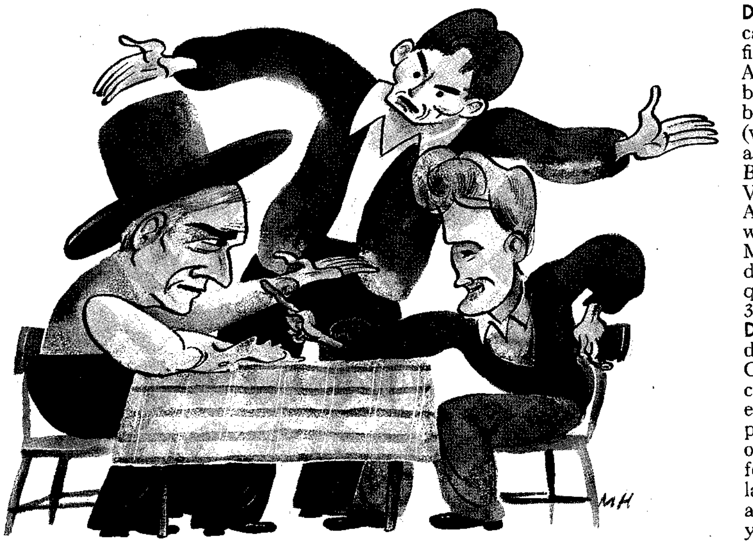
(Please call the phone number listed with the theatre for timetables and ticket information.)

Arthur & Leila—A play by Cherylene Lee about a middle-aged brother and sister who don't agree on very much. Ron Nakahara is the director. Presented by the Pan Asian Repertory Theatre. Previews through Oct. 6. Opens Oct. 7 at 8 and runs through Oct 22. (St. Clement's, 423 W. 46th St. 245-2660.)

A Cheever Evening—A. R. Gurney's new play, based on eighteen short stories by John Cheever. With John Cunningham, Jack Gilpin, Julie Hagerty, Mary Beth Peil, Robert Stanton, and Jennifer Van Dyck. Preview on Oct. 5. Opens Oct. 6 at 8. (Playwrights Horizons, 416 W. 42nd St. 279-4200.)

Killer Joe—A play by Tracy Letts about a violent Texas family. Opens Oct. 6 at 8. (29th Street Repertory Theatre, 212 W. 29th St. 465-0575.)

Uncommon Women and Others—Second Stage's revival of Wendy Wasserstein's 1977 play, directed by Carole Rothman. With Joan Buddenhagen, Julie Dretzin, Danielle Ferland, Jessica Lundy, Mary McCann, Haviland Morris, Robin Morse, Rosemary Murphy, and Stephanie Roth. In previews. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 239-6200.)



Robert Stattel, Robert Sean Leonard, and Jim True in "Philadelphia, Here I Come!"

Unexpected Tenderness—A comedy by Israel Horovitz, with Scotty Bloch, Caitlin Clarke, Sol Frieder, Karen Goberman, Paul O'Brien, Steve Ryan, and Jonathan Marc Sherman. Previews begin Oct. 6. (WPA Theatre, 519 W. 23rd St. 206-0523.)

Young Playwrights Festival—Presenting "The Basement at the Bottom at the End of the World," by Nadine Graham; "The Most Massive Woman Wins," by Madeleine George; and "The Love of Bullets," by Jerome D. Hairston. In previews. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150.)

OPENED RECENTLY

All in the Timing—Six sparkling short plays by David Ives add up to one enchanted evening. Ives and the deft director, Jason McConnell Buzas, are wonderfully served by their actors. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 239-6200.)

As You Like It—Cheek by Jowl, the English company, presents an all-male cast in Shakespeare's play, at the Next Wave Festival. (BAM's Majestic Theatre, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn. 1-718 636-4100. Closes Oct. 9.)

Beauty and the Beast—Disney's Broadway money-spinner, adapted from the animated-film version, has a few moments of solid-gold theatrical amazement: the showstopping "Be Our Guest" production number and the Beast's transformation into the Prince. Directed by Robert Jess Roth. (Reviewed in our issue of 5/2/94.) (Palace, Broadway at 47th St. 307-4100.)

Broken English—A play by Geraldine Sherman, set in London in the fifties, about the reunion of two Austrian Jewish refugees and their daughter. (28th Street Theatre, 120 W. 28th St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 9.)

Carousel—Nicholas Hytner's authoritative direction combines with Bob Crowley's inspired sets to transplant the National Theatre's 1993 smash hit onto the Vivian Beaumont stage. Bold, beautiful, and controversial, this multicultural reinterpretation launches Rodgers and Hammerstein toward the twenty-first century. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200.)

Damn Yankees—The big musical hit of 1955 is back, in its first Broadway revival. George Abbott and Douglass Wallop's book has been jarringly updated by the director, Jack O'Brien (with the help of the hundred-and-six-year-old Mr. Abbott). But the cast, which includes Victor Garber, delivers Richard Adler and Jerry Ross's music with sporty energy, and Rob Marshall has created some lively dance numbers. (4/4/94) (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 307-4100.)

Down by the Ocean—P. J. Barry directs the York Theatre Company's production of his charming and punchy new comedy—the latest in his cycle of plays set in the fictional town of Jericho, Rhode Island—about four vacationing brothers-in-law who are bewitched and exasperated by the beautiful young woman next door. With Melina Kanakaredes and Sam Groom. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. 935-5820.Closes Oct. 23.)

Faith Journey—A gospel musical, set in the South during the civil-rights movement. Book and lyrics by Clarence Cuthbertson and George Broderick, who also wrote the music. (Lamb's, 130 W. 44th St. 997-1780.)

First Night—Lannyl Stephens and Daniel McDonald in a romantic comedy by Jack Neary. (Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100.)

Grease!—The talented cast and the inventive production team show off the gleeful phonyness of Jim Jacobs and Warren Casey's musical with unembarrassed affection, and the result is a fun fake that's not trying to pass as the real thing. Billy Porter blows the

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THE THEATRE–Cont'd

lid off the joint with his Little Richard-like rendition of "Beauty School Dropout." Maureen McCormick recently replaced Rosie O'Donnell as the tough-talking Rizzo. Jeff Calhoun directed and choreographed. (5/30/94) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 239-6200.)

Hysterical Blindness and Other Southern Tragedies That Have Plagued My Life Thus Far—An autobiographical musical-comedy revue written by Leslie Jordan and starring Mark Baker. It's a tale of growing up Tennessean, thespian, and gay. Joe Patrick Ward's energetic musical numbers run the gamut from corn to gospel. (Playhouse on Vandam, 15 Vandam St. 691-1555.)

An Inspector Calls—J. B. Priestley's 1945 mystery is not really a play—it's a speech, about every man's link to every other man. The fine cast, which includes Kenneth Cranham, Philip Bosco, and Jane Adams, has ideas, not actions, to play. Directed by Stephen Daldry. (5/16/94) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jackie Mason: Politically Incorrect—A former rabbi from a family of rabbis, Mason uses the stage as his bully pulpit. Behind his shtick, which is sometimes vulgar but always funny, is a fundamentalist disgust at the world's fraud, wickedness, hypocrisy, and inhumanity. After a brief vacation, the show resumes performances on Oct. 11. (4/25/94) (Golden, 252 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Jean Cocteau Repertory—Presenting two shows in rotating repertory: "The Keepers," a drama by Barbara Lebow, set in Maine in the eighteen-fifties, and a modern-dress production of William Wycherley's seventeenth-century comedy "The Country Wife," directed by Tori Haring-Smith. (Bouwerie Lane Theatre, 330 Bowery, at Bond St. 677-0060.)

Jelly Roll!—Vernel Bagneris stars in a musical show about Jelly Roll Morton. With Morten Gunnar Larsen on piano. (47th Street Theatre, 304 W. 47th St. 265-1086.)

King Lear—The Pearl Theatre Company's first production in its bigger, better new home is this intelligent and lucid "Lear." The great foolishness is there, and the grief, but the light shed on the play is always temperate, never agonizing. Even as you're engaged by the fine cast, you may yearn for more intensity. With Robert Hock as Lear and Rachel Botchan as Cordelia. Directed by Shepard Sobel. (Theatre 80, at 80 St. Mark's Pl. 598-9802. Closes Oct. 22.)

King Ubu—Paul Todaro directed and stars in this production of George Rand's deft new translation of Alfred Jarry's fin-de-siècle satire. The Independent Theatre Company gives a diverting and campy spin to the nasty, low-down goings on. (House of Candles Theatre, 99 Stanton St. 353-3088. Closes Oct. 8.)

A Midsummer Night's Dream—The Ridiculous Theatrical Company puts its spin on Shakespeare's comedy, directed by, and starring, Everett Quinton. (Charles Ludlam Theatre, 1 Sheridan Sq. 691-2271.)

Mother and Child—A hospital room in Greenwich Village is the setting for this sentimental story about a Scripture-misquoting woman from Mississippi who arrives, with a suitcase full of denial, to care for her son, a onetime hustler who now has AIDS. The two achieve their expected reconciliation, which inevitably leads to a concluding Pietà tableau. Matthew Lombardo, formerly a writer for "Another World," wrote and directed; Helen Harrelson and Anthony M. Brown play the leads. (McGinn/Cazale, Broadway at 76th St. 279-4200.)

The Nest—First-time parents Kurt and Martha, who are masters of the sunny aphorism, learn the perils of blind obedience in this blue-collar morality tale by the Bavarian playwright Franz Xaver Kroetz. Ably directed by Moisés Kaufman, the matter-of-fact staging includes some surprisingly moving puppet-show interludes. Translated from the German by Roger Downey. (Theatre for the New City, 155 First Ave., at 10th St. 254-1109. Closes Oct. 9.)

Tiffany Dawn Heft and Gregory Amato of Smuin Ballets/SF, in "Dances with Songs," at the Joyce.

EDWIN FOTHERINGHAM

Passion—Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine's listless epistolary musical, in which the main characters spend much of their time singing love letters to and from each other. Jere Shea and Marin Mazzie are in fine voice as a dashing soldier and his lover, and Donna Murphy gives a stunning performance as Fosca, the predatory heroine. Lapine, who wrote the libretto, directed. (5/23/94) (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200.)

Philadelphia, Here I Come!—The Roundabout Theatre Company's revival of Brian Friel's 1966 play, with Pauline Flanagan, Robert Sean Leonard, Robert Stattel, and Jim True. Joe Dowling directed. (Roundabout, Broadway at 45th St. 869-8400. Closes Oct. 22.)

The Secretaries—A comedy, set in the office of an Oregon lumber mill, written and performed by the Five Lesbian Brothers (Maureen Angelos, Babs Davy, Dominique Dibbell, Peg Healey, and Lisa Kron). The play is a sustained, amusing look at the fine line between aggression and assertiveness. (New York Theatre Workshop, 79 E. 4th St. 302-6989. Closes Oct. 16.)

Show Boat—The 1927 musical by Jerome Kern and Oscar Hammerstein II, in a new production directed by Hal Prince. This revival, which originated in Toronto last year, features John McMartin, Elaine Stritch, Rebecca Luker, Lonette McKee, Mark Jacoby, and Michel Bell. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 307-4100.)

Stomp—A group of eight British rhythm specialists who use unconventional percussion instruments. The noise is terrific. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477.)

The Story of Dou-E/Snow in June—The Yangtze Repertory Theatre of America in its adaptation of a thirteenth-century Chinese play. The work incorporates elements of Peking Opera and is performed in both Mandarin and English. (La Mama, 74A E. 4th St. 475-7710. Closes Oct. 9.)

Talking Pictures—The Signature Theatre Company leads off its 1994-95 season with the first of four plays by this year's resident playwright, Horton Foote. In "Talking Pictures," Foote applies his precise, sure touch to a drama about a household and its boarders, in a small South Texas town at the dawn of the Depression. A gentle pace and quiet tone almost conceal the jam-packed plot, which includes two weddings, two divorces, and a flesh wound. Directed by Carol Goodheart, "Talking Pictures" is blessed with a first-rate cast, including Hallie Foote, the playwright's daughter, in a notable performance. (Kampo Cultural Center, 31 Bond St. 279-4200. Closes Oct. 23.)

That's Life!—A seriocomic revue about the variety of Jewish life in America. Thirteen composers and lyricists collaborated on the twenty musical numbers. The choreography and direction are by Helen Butleroff. (Theatre East, 211 E. 60th St. 838-9090.)

Three Tall Women—A moving, poetic play by Edward Albee, which is dominated by the huge, heroic performance of Myra Carter. Jordan Baker and the droll and delightful Marian Seldes are also in the cast. (5/16/94) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 239-6200.)

LONG RUNS

angels in america: "Millennium Approaches" and "Perestroika." (Walter Kerr, 219 W. 48th St. 239-6200.) . . . **blood brothers:** Music Box, 239 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **blue man group/tubes:** Astor Place Theatre, 434 Lafayette St. 254-4370. . . . **cats:** Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. . . . **crazy for you:** Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **family secrets:** Westside Theatre, 407 W. 43rd St. 307-4100. . . . **the fantasticks:** Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. . . . **guys and dolls:** Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **kiss of the spider woman:** Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **les misérables:** Imperial, 249 W. 45th St. 239-6200. . . . **miss saigon:** Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. . . . **nunsense:** Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. . . . **perfect crime:** Duffy, 1553 Broadway, at 46th St. 695-3401. . . . **the phantom of the opera:** Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. . . . **tony n' tina's wedding:** St. John's Church, 81 Christopher St. 279-4200. . . . **the who's tommy:** St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 239-6200.

IN ANOTHER CATEGORY—PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

Mathew in the School of Life, Part I: The Lamb of God—A new electronic opera/musical-theatre work by John Moran, performed by the Ridge Theatre. (The Kitchen, 512 W. 19th St. 255-5793. Oct. 6-9 at 8. Through Oct. 23.)

P.S. 122—Deb Margolin in her new show, "Of Mice, Bugs, and Women," a trio of monologues. Oct. 6-9 at 7:30. Through Oct. 23. . . . ¶ Reno, the writer/comedian/performance artist, presents new material. Oct. 6-9 at 9. Through Nov. 12. (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

DANCE

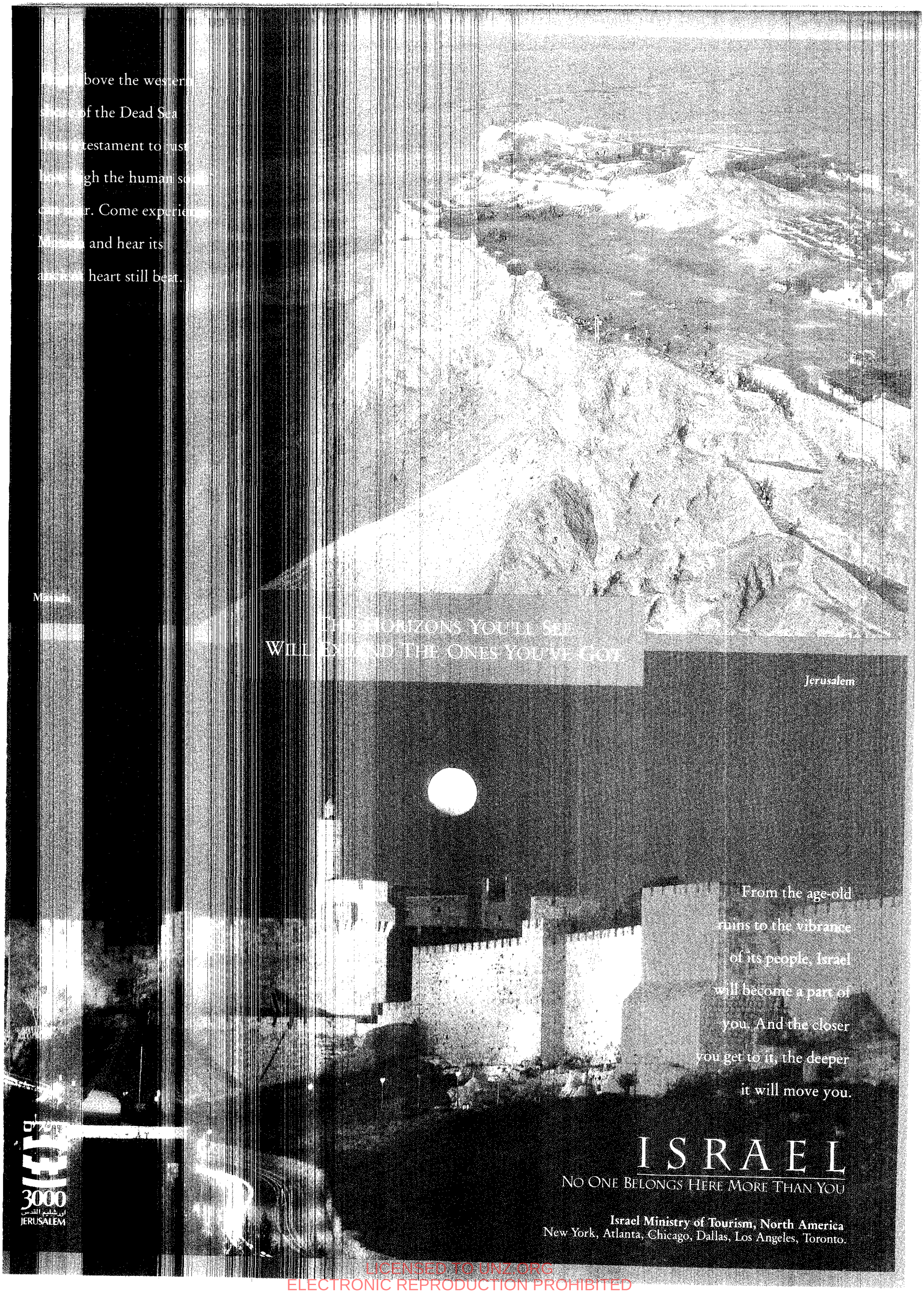
"Radical Graham"—Final performances of an engagement by the Martha Graham Dance Company. Oct. 5 at 8 and Oct. 9 at 3: "Errand Into the Maze," "Celebration," "Primitive Mysteries," "Herodiade," and "Maple Leaf Rag." . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 8: "Appalachian Spring," "Satyric Festival Song," "Deep Song," "Lamentation," "Chronicle," and "Dark Meadow." . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 8: "Clytemnestra." . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 8: "El Penitente," "Deep Song," "Cave of the Heart," "Deaths and Entrances," and "Heretic." (Brooklyn Academy of Music, 30 Lafayette Ave. 1-718 636-4100.)

Paul Taylor Dance Company—The opening performance of a two-week engagement. Oct. 11 at 7 (a benefit): "Diggity," "Aureole," "Moonbine" (première), and "Syzygy." (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 581-1212. Through Oct. 23.)

Lewitzky Dance Company—The Los Angeles-based modern-dance company presents "Confines," "Episode #4: Turf," "Impressions, #1 (Henry Moore)," and "Meta 4." (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 5-8 at 8 and Oct. 9 at 2 and 7:30.)

Art Bridgman/Myrna Packer—In "The Bare-Bones Circus." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Oct. 6-8 at 8 and Oct. 9 at 3.)

Smuin Ballets/SF—Michael Smuin's newly formed company will perform "Dances with Songs," to recordings by the Beatles, Nat King Cole, Elvis Presley, and others. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 242-0800. Oct. 11 at 8. Through Oct. 16.)



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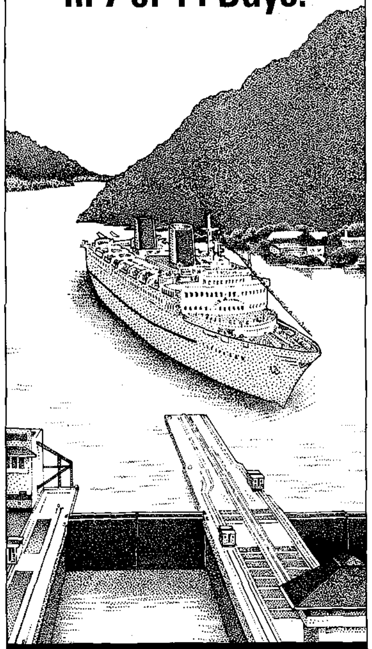
Paul Cézanne, *Compotier, Pitcher, and Fruit* (detail) 1892-94 © 1994 The Barnes Foundation



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NIGHT LIFE

No-Dōz Nation

THE four members of the New York band Luscious Jackson are smart, ambitious, and self-possessed young women who happen to have grown up in the seventies. Like many of their peers, the Luscious ladies are tired of the depressed-slacker stereotype that has attached itself to their generation. "Most young people I know have active, interesting lives," says singer and bassist Jill Cunniff. "If we reject that whole achieve, achieve, achieve thing, it's not because we're *lazy,* necessarily."

There are certainly no slackers in this enterprising hip-hop outfit, which includes guitarist and "gabber" (i.e., low-key rapper) Gabby Glaser, keyboardist Vivian Trimble, and drummer Kate Schellenbach. But Luscious Jackson is no producer's daydream of an updated girl group. Schellenbach was the original drummer for the Beastie Boys, and together these gals wrote and produced their own first release, a 1993 EP titled "In Search of Manny." Luscious Jackson's dêbut album, "Natural Ingredients," is winning the group a wider audience.

In addition to rap elements, the Luscious sound also draws on the soulful influence of early-seventies R. & B. and the energy and attitude of late-seventies punk. Some of the new songs tackle social issues and take aim at misogyny, but above all Luscious Jackson is fun, and the band's live performances are a treat for that reason. Head on over to Irving Plaza on October 11 and watch these women play hard for the money.

CONCERTS

HIGHLIGHTS IN JAZZ: "THE ART OF SWINGING"—A band that includes the irrepressible bassist Milt Hinton, the encyclopedic pianist Dick Hyman, and the sturdy drummer Ray Mosca is guaranteed to swing, but the filling inside the chocolate will be the featured saxophonist, Flip Phillips. Remembered (not always fondly) as the tenor player who specialized in dog-call high notes in the forties, Phillips has got all that out of his system. A rhapsodic romantic who brings to mind the robust Ben Webster, Phillips demands and deserves reappraisal. (Pace Downtown Theatre, Spruce St. between Nassau and Gold Sts. 346-1715. Oct. 6 at 8.)

BARENAKED LADIES—Five fully clothed Canadian guys, actually. Their first album, "Gordon" (1992), featured jaunty, eccentrically folkie songs that were tender, funny, and free of irony, and covered such subjects as enduring life in the ninth grade and "lying in bed just like Brian Wilson did" during a creative slump. On their recent follow-up, "Maybe You Should Drive," the emotions are closer to the surface, the whimsy wryer, and the music lusher—thanks to the production of Ben Mink, k. d. lang's collaborator on "Ingénue." This show should provide a blast of wit and warmth from north of the border. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. 840-2824. Oct. 7 at 8.)

SMITHSONIAN JAZZ MASTERWORKS ORCHESTRA—The eminent musicologist Gunther Schuller and conductor David Baker will lead the acclaimed Washington-based Smithsonian Jazz Masterworks Orchestra in an overview of the entire big-band era. Expect to hear new life blown into both the immortals (Ellington, Basie, Henderson) and choice obscurities. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 7 at 8.)

Eric Clapton—Over the course of a thirty-year career, Clapton has been everything from rock-guitar godhead to avatar of mellow, yet he appears to have embarked on a whole new chapter—a "blue period" of sorts. Clapton's new record, "From the Cradle," is an homage to the guitarist's influences: the stark, eloquent blues of Freddy King, Willie Dixon, and Muddy Waters, to name a few. It's a raw, tender reading of almost bottomless pain. Live, it should be bracing stuff. With Jimmie Vaughan, who's no slouch himself. (Madison Square Garden. 465-6741. Oct. 8-10 at 8.)

John Zorn's Masada—Unrelenting rabble-rouser John Zorn has musically deconstructed everything from Japanese porn-film soundtracks to the hallowed scores of Ornette Coleman and Ennio Morricone. Now, reëxamining his roots, Zorn takes on klezmer and Jewish folk themes. Oy gevalt. (Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St. Oct. 9 at 7.)

Kitaro—Long before the phrase New Age was ever spoken, Kitaro was numbing the masses with his lush keyboard soundscapes. Recently, his appeal has been overshadowed by such unlikely interlopers as Yanni and Enya, but he still looks better in a flowing white cape than anybody else. (Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 247-4777. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Hamiet Bluiett—Alternative Museum, 594 Broadway. 966-4444. Oct. 5 at 8.

"The Mystical Arts of Tibet"—The monks of the Drepung Loseling Monastery present sacred Tibetan music and dance. (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. 864-5400. Oct. 8 at 8.)

"All Nite Soul"—The annual jazz marathon at St. Peter's Church. Performers include Jimmy Heath, Daphne Hellman, Doc Cheatham, Gail Wynters, Valerie Capers, Nancie Banks, and Kenny Drew, Jr. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Oct. 9 from 5 P.M. to 5 A.M. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Algonquin Hotel, 59 W. 44th St. (840-6800)—Singer-songwriter **LOIS WALDEN** is currently offering "A Woman's Intuition," in the woody nook known as the Oak Room. Dining.

Arthur's Tavern, 57 Grove St. (675-6879)—Mondays belong to the Grove Street Stompers, Tuesdays through Thursdays to Al Bundy and Johnny Parker, weekends to the Freddy Francis trio, and Sundays to Lee Lorenz and the Creole Cookin' Jazz Band.

Ballroom, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—Comedienne **JOY BEHAR** will be here through Oct. 15.

Birdland, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—The **MICKEY BASS** quartet appears on Oct. 7-8. Dining.

Blue Note, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—The **CHICK COREA** quartet plays through Oct. 9. Fusion forays aside, there's no denying that Corea has been one of the most influential jazz pianists of the past twenty years. A harmonically inventive impressionist who enlivens his work with rhythmic impetuosity, Corea will be joined for this gig by bassist John Patitucci and saxophonist Bob Berg. Beginning Oct. 11: the enormously popular **SPYRO GYRA.**

Bradley's, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—Through Oct. 9: two of the best young pianists in New York, **JACKY TERRASSON** and **DANILO PEREZ,** will go man to man on twin instruments. The results should be smart, playful, and grandly orchestral. Starting Oct. 10: singer **KEVIN MAHOGANY** joins forces with pianist **JAMES WILLIAMS** and bassist **CURTIS LUNDY.** As a rule, Bradley's doesn't feature singers, but for Mahogany, a big man with a big voice, they'll make an exception. Dining.

Cajun, 129 Eighth Ave., at 16th St. (691-6174)—A New Orleans-style restaurant specializing in Dixieland and swing. On Fridays, catch the Canal Street Dixieland Jazz and Blues band. Saturdays belong to the New Atlantic Jazz band.

Carlyle Hotel, Madison Ave. at 76th St. (744-1600)—The Café Carlyle, a snug, windowless enclave in the doorman district, features discreet waiters, wraparound pastel murals, and **BARBARA COOK,** backed up by **WALLY HARPER,** her longtime pianist and arranger. Cook's voice remains almost defiantly that of the nineteen-fifties Broadway ingénue. She and Mel Tormé (currently singing at Michael's Pub) could go on tour as the Mr. and Mrs. Ponce de León of the club circuit. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in Bemelmans Bar, **RONNY WHYTE** presides at the piano. Whyte (handsome, dapper, easygoing) is a first-class singer. His voice and delivery resemble Bobby Short's, and he is a creditable accompanist and jazz pianist. He favors songs that have fallen by the wayside—the ones that were dropped from shows on opening night or landed on the cutting room floor.

Fat Tuesday's, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7900)—Singer **CAROL SLOANE** performs through Oct. 9. Sloan's on-again, off-again career is on again. In a world of vocal showoffs, she stands out by grounding her art in mellifluous tones, sure rhythm, and good taste. The **MARTIN ARROYO** quartet begins an engagement on Sept. 11. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL** leads a trio. Dining.

Fez, 380 Lafayette St. (533-7000)—The **MINGUS BIG BAND** still packs them in every Thursday. Dining.

Fifty Seven Fifty Seven, 57 E. 57th St. (758-5757)—A cool, sumptuous piano-and-bass room in the Four Seasons Hotel, with twenty-two-foot-high ceilings, a long backlit bar stocked with single-malt Scotch, and fine jazz seven nights a week. Wednesdays through Saturdays, **DONALD JOHNSTON** is the featured pianist. Dining.

Five Spot, 4 W. 31st St. (631-0100)—Oct. 5-6: **BLUES WING,** with Jimmy Madison on drums and Chip Jackson on bass. **JILL HUGHES** is here on Oct. 7-8. Dining.

Iridium, 44 W. 63rd St. (582-2121)—Across the street from Lincoln Center, this restaurant and club features a handsome bar upstairs and a surreal performance space downstairs. The **RODNEY KENDRICK** quartet continues through Oct. 8. Starting Oct. 11: the **DONALD HARRISON** quartet, featuring **CYRUS CHESTNUT.**

Knickerbocker, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—Brass rails, vintage posters, Hirschfeld drawings, and a piano. **VALERIE CAPERS** and **JOHN ROBINSON** team up on Oct. 6-9.

Knitting Factory, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—John Zorn's **COBRA** is in on Oct. 9. Oct. 11: Violinist **BILLY BANG** hosts a tribute to the late Sonny Sharrock.

Le Madeleine, 403 W. 43rd St. (246-2993)—Every Sunday evening, guitar great **GENE BERTONCINI** lights up this cozy Hell's Kitchen bistro with his simmering melodicism and chordal grace. On Mondays, **JOHN WALLOWITCH** and **BERTRAM ROSS** present an evening of cabaret and standards.

Metropolis, 31 Union Square W. (675-2300)—Monday nights, catch **CON-TRI-BUTION,** a reggae-tinged jazz collective. Tuesdays are given over to the **GEORGE GEE ORCHESTRA,** a seventeen-piece swing band. **ELVIN JONES** is in on Oct. 7-9.

Michael's Pub, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—The great **MEL TORMÉ** continues through Oct. 9. The Velvet Fog has still got it. He's as spry as a featherweight, and his material—everything from Johnny Mercer to Donald Fagen—is topnotch. On Mondays, Woody Allen continues his night job as clarinet player in the **NEW ORLEANS FUNERAL AND RAGTIME ORCHESTRA,** a Dixieland-jazz ensemble.

Rainbow & Stars, 30 Rockefeller Plaza. (632-5000)—A plush, old-fashioned night club, sixty-five floors above it all, complete with Art Deco fixtures, intimate glitter, and a panoramic view as dizzying as the tab. Sleek cabaret deity **KAREN AKERS** concludes her latest engagement, on Oct. 15. . . . ¶ Across the hall, in the Rainbow

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Room, there's a revolving dance floor, and swinging big-band music courtesy of the Rainbow Room Orchestra, featuring vocalists Michael Andrew and Claudette Sierra. Closed Mondays.

Russian Tea Room, 150 W. 57th St. (265-0947)—Borscht, blini, and other things to make the heart beat faster. Torch singer **BABY JANE DEXTER** is in the house on Oct. 9. Dining.

Sweet Basil, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—**DEWEY REDMAN** entertains through Oct. 9. Redman is often defined by his work with Ornette Coleman and Keith Jarrett, but his distinctive sound—rich with unconventional instrumentation, odd modal flourishes, and intricate Latin rhythms—defines a genre all its own. An electrified big band belonging to trumpeter **MILES EVANS** is in action on Mondays. Dining.

Tavern on the Green, Central Park W. at 67th St. (873-3200)—The **ILLINOIS JACQUET BIG BAND** is currently in the midst of a two-week engagement, winding up on Oct. 16. Since Jacquet, a journeyman survivor, put this outfit together, in 1983, it has become a smooth, highly popular group, easy to dance to and most notable for the sound of its leader's tenor sax.

Village Vanguard, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—Through Oct. 9: **KENNY BARRON, BUSTER WILLIAMS,** and **BEN RILEY.** The team of pianist Barron, bassist Williams, and drummer Riley is more than a rhythm section—it's a brotherhood. With **JAMES SPAULDING.** The **BOBBY HUTCHERSON** quartet begins a run on Oct. 11. The **VANGUARD JAZZ ORCHESTRA** holds sway on Mondays.

Visiones, 125 Macdougal St., at W. 3rd St. (673-5576)—Drummer **BOBBY PREVITE** is in on Oct. 5, with a band featuring saxophonist **TIM BERNE.** Previte will be playing tunes from his new record, "Hue and Cry."

Zinno, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—The food is Italian and the musicians, who set up in a room between the bar and the dining room, are first-rate. Guitarist **PETER LEITCH** and pianist **JOHN HICKS** are here through Oct. 8. The always tasteful Leitch has used the effusive Hicks on a number of his recordings. Together, they produce a wonderful sweet-and-sour effect.

ROCK, ETC.

Academy, 234 W. 43rd St.—**L7** stops by on Oct. 5. These grrls obviously spent more time listening to the Ramones than to the Supremes. On their new album, "Hungry for Stink," they continue to flex their muscles with a vengeance. Arrive early, so you don't miss the winning alternative pop of the **MELVINS** and **WOOL.** The **MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES** are here on Oct. 7-8. For concert information, call 249-8870.

A.K.A., 77 W. Houston St., at Wooster St. (673-7325)—Jazz, hip-hop, and world beat meet in this small, velvet-draped club. The **SCREAMING HEADLESS TORSOS** swing by on Oct. 8.

Blarney Star, 43 Murray St. (732-2873)—Home to fine Irish music every Friday night. **PAT KILBRIDE** plays guitar and cittern on Oct 7.

Bottom Line, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—Singer-songwriter **FERRON** makes an appearance on Oct. 5. A-cappella oddities **THE BOBS** sing on Oct. 6. **J. GEILS** (guitar) and **MAGIC DICK** (harmonica), of the J. Geils band, drop in on Oct. 7. Oct. 9: Folksinger **PATTY LARKIN.** Oct. 11: **STEVE HOWE.** Howe was inducted into *Guitar Player* magazine's "Gallery of the Greats" for his work with Yes in the seventies. He was worshipped for performing feats of derring-do and for incorporating electric sitar, pedal steel, and other exotica into Yes's phantasmagorical palette. Howe also composed whimsical acoustic pieces, like "The Clap" and "Mood for a Day." Expect more of the latter at this gig.

Brownies, 169 Avenue A, at 10th St. (429-8392)—Inching closer and closer to respectability, this former dive in the East Village now features a new stage, a beefed-up sound system, and a steady lineup of hardcore bands hungry for the big money. **TRENCHMOUTH** and **GODHEAD SILO** provide the entertainment on Oct. 8.

CBGB & OMFUG, 315 Bowery, at Bleecker St. (982-4052)—The frantic industrial-funk band **COP SHOOT COP** returns on Oct. 6. On Oct. 7: **ANTIETAM.** . . .¶Next door, at CB's Gallery, downtown legend **OREN BLOEDOW** is in on Oct. 6.

Chicago B.L.U.E.S., 73 Eighth Ave., at 13th St. (924-9755)—A new palace dedicated to the music of the Windy City. Oct. 5-8: Blues with **JIMMY DAWKINS.**

Cleopatra Supper Club, 327 W. 44th St (262-1111)—Live music, belly dancing, and an honest-to-God whirling dervish, every Wednesday through Sunday night.

The Cooler, 416 W. 14th St. (229-0785)—**BABE THE BLUE OX** (dubbed best local band by the New York *Press*) appears on Oct. 7. The **KLEZMATICS** lay it down on Oct. 11. Every Monday in October, Sonic Youth guitarist **LEE RANALDO** curates a free evening of noise and art. Wednesday nights are given over to experimental d.j. spinoffs.

Don Hill's, 511 Greenwich St. (219-2850)—A tidy little West Village bar with an above-average P.A. system and topnotch local bands on the docket. Vocalist **HELEN HOOKE** appears on Oct. 6.

Duplex, 61 Christopher St., at Seventh Ave. (255-5438)—Everyone is a star here—the pianist, the bartender, the waiters, and the audience. The fabulous **LADY BUNNY** is your hostess every Tuesday night.

Flannery's, 205 W. 14th St. (929-9589)—A well-scrubbed, amiable Irish pub with many of the classic features (pints of Guinness, non-stop TV sports) and a few of the near-classics (a CD jukebox, a portrait of Elvis).

Irving Plaza, 17 Irving Pl., at 15th St. (777-6800)—Oct. 7: **D GENERATION.** Local heroes **GOD STREET WINE** play on Oct. 8, followed, on Oct. 11, by local heroines **LUSCIOUS JACKSON.** . . . ¶ The Swing Dance Society gathers here every Sunday night, at the Continental Club. The dancers all share a passion for the Lindy Hop, a dance that involves a lot of whirling and the occasional display of underwear. Sets from eight until midnight. For information on the society, call 696-9737.

Limelight, Sixth Ave. at 20th St. (807-7850)—**MIRANDA SEX GARDEN** is here on Oct. 11. Wednesday night is Disco 2000.

L7 at the Academy.

ROBERT MELEE

Ludlow Street Café, 165 Ludlow St. (353-0536)—Mondays belong to **BEAT RODEO,** a straight-shooting bar band that plays a mixture of country, blues, Dylan, Byrds, Velvets, and various pop curiosities.

Manny's Car Wash, 1558 Third Ave., at 87th St. (369-2583)—The **SANDRA WRIGHT** band arrives on Oct. 7. On Oct. 10, catch guitar wonder **JOHNNY ALLEN.**

Maxwell's, 1039 Washington St., Hoboken. (1-201 798-4064)—Oct. 5: **COP SHOOT COP** warms up for its CB's gig the following night. A wild outfit called **SOUL COUGHING** opens. On Oct. 8: a double bill featuring two wacky, brilliant country singers. **SLEEPY LA BEEF** is an Arkansas boy who is reputed to know six thousand songs; his sets are always full of surprises. **JIM LAUDERDALE** has a little bit of Roger Miller-style mischief in his soul, but his carefully crafted, slightly surreal song confections are far from novelty numbers. His new album, "Pretty Close to the Truth," continues the wonderful journey he started in 1991 with "Planet of Love."

Mercury Lounge, 217 E. Houston St. (260-4700)—**SINGLE GUN THEORY** is here on Oct. 6. Singer-songwriter **KATELL KEINEG** appears on Oct. 7-8. Like Jeff Buckley, Keineg raised a buzz playing downtown clubs like Café Siné, and now she has a major-label deal. The wistfully forthright folk-rock songs on her recent Elektra Records début, "O Seasons O Castles," have a delicate charm. On Oct. 9, catch **JIM LAUDERDALE,** with **SOMETHING HAPPENS** and **CHARLIE CHESTERMAN.**

Paddy Reilly's Music Bar, 519 Second Ave., at 29th St. (686-1210)—**BLACK 47** usually plays on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and Speir Mor (Gaelic for Big Sky) performs for a hearty following on Fridays. Séisiún—a traditional Irish jam—is on Thursday nights.

Les Poulets, 16 W. 22nd St. (229-2000)—The name may be French, but the music here is Latin: expect salsa, merengue, and the occasional cha-cha. Dining.

Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—Oct. 5-6: Saxophonist **GEORGE HOWARD.** Oct. 11: **SCOTT HENDERSON & TRIBAL TECH.** Closed Sundays. Dining.

Supper Club, 240 W. 47th St. (921-1940)—**CONSOLIDATED** is in on Oct. 6, with **MC 900-FT. JESUS.** Consolidated's politically correct hip-hop explores liberal guilt—the San Francisco-based trio has been rapping about AIDS, abortion, rape, and gun control since their first album, in 1990. One of the highlights of the band's latest album, "Business of Punishment," is what seems to be a cameo sound bite from Andrea Dworkin, on the contagiously funky track "No Answer For a Dancer." After their gigs, the band is known to hold question-and-answer sessions. **GIANT STEP,** a roving collective of musicians, rappers, and d.j.s who mix jazz, funk, and hip-hop.

Tatou, 151 E. 50th St. (753-1144)—**JOAN RIVERS** appears on Oct. 7-8. The **NAT JONES** trio entertains every weekend. Dining.

Tramps, 51 W. 21st St. (727-7788)—**RONNIE EARL** performs on Oct. 7, with Luther (Guitar Jr.) Johnson. On Oct. 8: drummer **MAUREEN TUCKER,** the Velvet Underground's diminutive dynamo, with special guests **STERLING MORRISON** and **VICTOR DE LORENZO.** Monday nights, Tramps presents Soul Kitchen, an evening of seventies funk and R. & B. for devotees of Don Cornelius.

Webster Hall, 125 E. 11th St. (353-1600)—A byzantine disco wonderland with four floors, a coffee shop, and a wig boutique. The **DADA BALL,** a benefit for Housing Works and Visual AIDS, takes place on Oct. 11. (For information call 431-3770.) Wednesday is drag night. Psychedelic Thursdays feature grunge acts and cheap beer.

Wetlands, 161 Hudson St. (966-4225)—**BILLY GOAT** is in on Oct. 6.

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ART

The Road of Excess

BEING called a minor master used to be a compliment, but nowadays everyone wants to be a giant. The quirky Bay Area collagist and painter Jess may make it a term of respect again. He's nearly the ideal minor artist: his vision, although mystical and highly original, is tightly focussed; his works themselves are mostly small—even his name is small.

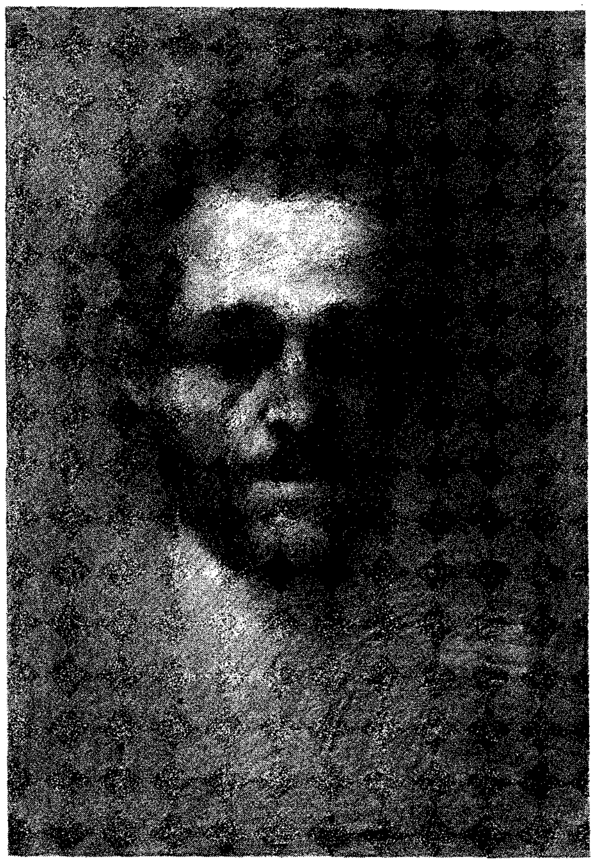
At the Whitney's "Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951-1993" (through December 4), the artist's work falls into three categories. First, there are the collages, which he calls "paste-ups": dense phantasmagorias, painstakingly pieced together from the artist's enormous collection of visual sources. The extravagantly titled "Arkadia's Last Resort; or Fête Champêtre up Mnemosyne Creek (Autumn)" (1976) looks like something Hieronymus Bosch dreamed during the Summer of Love. Then there are the "Salvages": canvases found in secondhand stores, on the street, or in the artist's own reject pile, over which he has painted a second image, intermingling two worlds. These paintings have a conventional Romantic prettiness that is disarmingly sincere. The "Translations" are the most technically accomplished works: heavily impastoed oils that faithfully transfer onto canvas found images such as Victorian engravings, a photograph of the Beatles, medical illustrations, Greek vases . . . Jess's world has room for everything.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

METROPOLITAN MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—"Willem de Kooning: Paintings." Opens Oct. 11. . . . ¶ "The Photographs of Édouard Baldus: Landscapes and Monuments of France." Shots from the nineteenth century. . . . ¶ "Ominous Hush: The Thunderstorm Paintings of Martin Johnson Heade." . . . ¶ "Origins of Impressionism" begins with paintings seen at the historic and influential Salon of 1859 and includes nudes, landscapes, and still-lifes. . . . ¶ Gowns, daywear, and costume jewelry by Mme. Grès, a French designer active from 1930 to 1988, are on display in the Costume Institute. . . . ¶ The roof garden is open through the end of October. (Open Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Mapping" features some twenty works of art that incorporate maps. Opens Oct. 6. . . . ¶ "American Politicians: Photographs from 1843 to 1993," including one of Abraham Lincoln by Mathew Brady. Opens Oct. 6. . . . ¶ "Cy Twombly: A Retrospective." (A concurrent show of his works is at the Gagosian gallery.) . . . ¶ "Drawing in Black and White: A Selection of Contemporary Works from the Collection." . . . ¶ "The Prints of Louise Bourgeois." On the tail of the Brooklyn Museum's retrospective, this exhibit focusses on the artist's etchings and lithographs, including "He Disappeared Into Complete Silence" (1946-47) and "Ste. Sebastienne" (1992). (There are two installations by Bourgeois at the Blum gallery.) . . . ¶ An exhibit of movie stills, from films ranging from "Intolerance" (1916) to "Danton" (1983). Through Oct. 11. (Open Saturdays through Tuesdays, 11 to 6; Thursdays and Fridays, noon to 8:30.)

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"The Italian Metamorphosis, 1943-68." Opens Oct. 7. (Open Sundays through Wednesdays, from 10 to 6, and Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 8.)



Self-portrait by Lorenzo Cardi (McCoy).

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM SOHO, 575 Broadway—"Japanese Art After 1945: Scream Against the Sky." (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 6, and Saturday evenings until 8.)

WHITNEY MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—"Jess: A Grand Collage, 1951-1993," a survey of works by this former nuclear physicist. . . . ¶ "Neil Jenney: Natural Rationalism." Five paintings, including "North America Abstracted" (1978-80), that illustrate Jenney's response to the American landscape tradition. . . . ¶ A retrospective of more than two hundred paintings and works on paper by Joseph Stella (1877-1946), the American Futurist. Through Oct. 9. (A complementary show is at the Kraushaar gallery.) (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 6; Thursdays, 1 to 8.)

AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, Central Park W. at 79th St.—"Empires Beyond the Great Wall: The Heritage of Genghis Khan." None of these objects have ever been exhibited in the West before; some of the most impressive are associated with the culture of the horse and the hunt. They offer an interesting glimpse into the lives of the nomadic people who conquered China. . . . ¶ "Royal Tombs of Sipán." Gold, silver, and gilded copper objects of the Moche, a pre-Inca civilization of northern Peru and one of the world's major ancient civilizations. The curators are probably right to identify Sipán as the richest burial site ever excavated in the New World. (Open daily, 10 to 5:45, and Friday and Saturday evenings until 8:45.)

BROOKLYN MUSEUM, Eastern Parkway—Dale Chihuly's "The Brooklyn Wall," an installation of blown glass, is on view in the lobby. (Cowles gallery is concurrently showing the artist's glass sculptures.) . . . ¶ Selected works of Leon Polk Smith, an American abstract painter. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

ASIA SOCIETY, Park Ave. at 70th St.—"An Enduring Legacy: The Mr. and Mrs. John D. Rockefeller 3rd Collection." Opens Oct. 7. (Open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 8; Sundays, noon to 5.)

BRONX MUSEUM OF THE ARTS, 1040 Grand Concourse—"Cartographies: 14 Artists from Latin America." Opens Oct. 7. (Open Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)

COOPER-HEWITT MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Good Offices and Beyond: The Evolution of the Workplace" focusses on how the offices of the seventies and eighties incorporated the technological advances of those decades. . . . ¶ "The Structure of Style: Dutch Modernism in the Applied Arts 1880-1930." Selected ceramics, magazine covers, and glassware, among other objects, detail a period of increasing industrialization in Europe. (Open Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

DIA CENTER FOR THE ARTS, 548 W. 22nd St.—"Worlds Envisioned: Alighiero e Boetti and Frédéric Bruly Bouabré." Opens Oct. 6. . . . ¶ "Andy Warhol: The Last Supper Paintings." Andy and Leonardo go way back: Warhol's multiple compositions of the "Mona Lisa," with such titles as "Thirty Are Better Than One," were his only early-sixties paintings to borrow from art history. In 1986, just before he died, Warhol returned to Leonardo with a series based on "The Last Supper," the second-most-famous painting in the world. The series appears to be an attempt to recapture the energy of his classic period, but it never takes off. "Sixty Last Suppers" is a silk-screen multiple in classic Warhol style, but its bloated dimensions—it's more than thirty-two feet long—make it bombastic rather than powerful. Another huge canvas combines bits and pieces of the Leonardo, which are hand-drawn (with the aid of a projector) and then desultorily painted in flat patches of color, like a paint-by-number picture. A mental comparison with Warhol's early paint-by-number satire, the witty, astonishingly original "Do It Yourself" series, from 1962, makes these last paintings a little depressing, and more than a little poignant. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

FRICK COLLECTION, 1 E. 70th St.—Sèvres porcelain, Limoges enamel, and paintings by Vermeer, Rembrandt, Whistler, and El Greco are all on view in this former residence of Henry Clay Frick (1849-1919). (Open daily, except Mondays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 6.)

GOETHE HOUSE, 1014 Fifth Ave., at 83rd St.—"Double Realities," photographs by Miyase Ceren, who uses photomontage to combine images. Through Oct. 15. (Open Tuesdays and Thursdays, noon to 7; Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 5.)

JEWISH MUSEUM, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—"Jewish Life in Tsarist Russia: A World Rediscovered." Opens Oct. 9. . . . ¶ "Mario Cavaglieri: The Glittering Years, 1912-1922" features thirty-six paintings, both interiors

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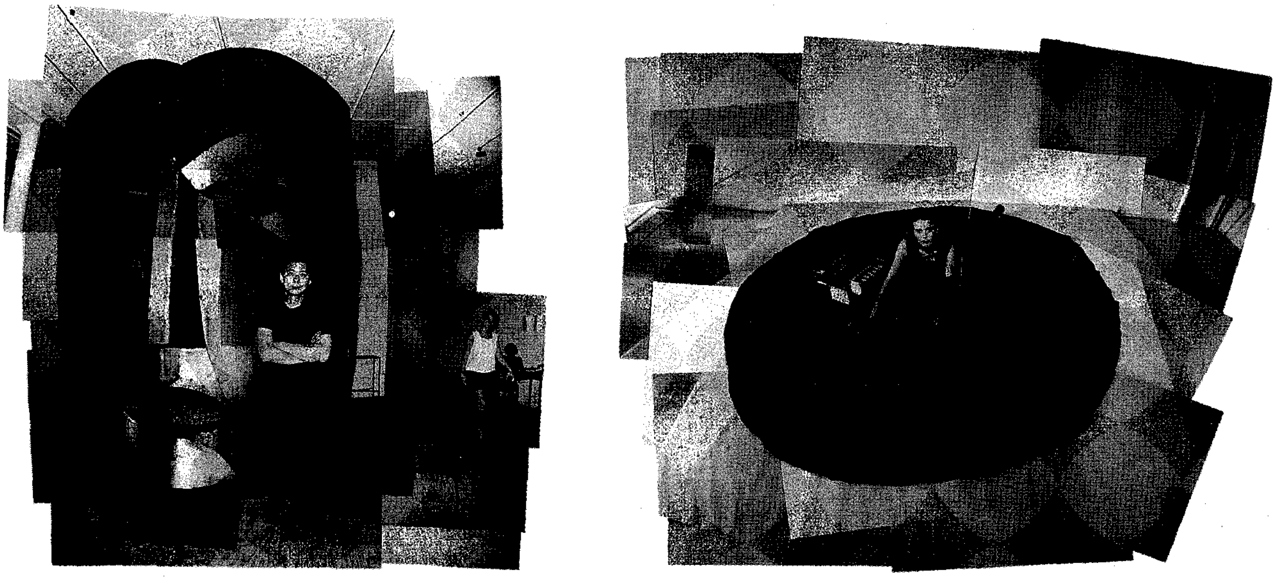
ART–Cont'd

and portraits, by Cavaglieri (1887-1969), an Italian Jew, whose work recalls the bright colors and thick brushwork of the Fauves. (Open Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 11 to 5:45; Tuesdays, 11 to 8.)

Morgan Library, 29 E. 36th St.—"The Thaw Collection: Master Drawings and New Acquisitions" ranges from a Jackson Pollock sketch to a Peter Paul Rubens study for "The Descent from the Cross." The collection is particularly strong in French drawings from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. (Open Tuesdays through Fridays, 10:30 to 5; Saturdays, 10:30 to 6; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Museo del Barrio, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"Recovering Popular Culture," the second part of the series "Artists Talk Back: Visual Conversations with El Museo," includes a bodega exhibit, work by contemporary craftspeople, and an exhibit pairing work from the permanent collection with that of contemporary artists. Next to woven baskets are Rene David Chamizo's undulating rattan wall hangings; the chock-full bodega setup ties in nicely with Pepón Osorio's "La Cama," a heavily decorated bed. If the theme of the show occasionally seems forced, the momentum makes up for it. (Open Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, 11 to 5; Thursdays, noon to 7.)



"Let the Artist Live!," at Exit Art.

JEREMY WOLFF

Museum of American Folk Art, Columbus Ave. at 65th St.—"Every Picture Tells a Story: Word and Image in American Folk Art." Everything from a pre-Revolutionary illustrated birth certificate to a more contemporary text: "Try Me," painted on tin roofing. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11:30 to 7:30.)

Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave. at 104th St.—"The Making of a Mural: Reginald Marsh at the Custom House." Opens Oct. 7. . . . ¶ "Modern Metropolis" includes more than two dozen vintage prints of New York, from the early part of this century. Through Oct. 18. (Open Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

National Academy of Design, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—"Altered States: Conservation, Analysis, and the Interpretation of Works of Art." Opens Oct. 5. . . . ¶ "Glancing Backward: Edith Wharton's New York." Paintings, drawings, sculpture, and books that detail the literary career of Edith Wharton. Through Oct. 30. (Open Wednesdays through Sundays, noon to 5; Friday evenings until 8, with no admission charge after 5.)

New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St.—"The Raw and the Cooked: Images of Food from the Renaissance to the Present." On the menu are a Dürer engraving of Adam and Eve sharing an apple, and a Berenice Abbott photograph of potatoes. . . . ¶ "Broken Rules and Double Crosses: Ken Campbell, an Artist's Books." (Mondays, Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, 10 to 6; Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 11 to 6.)

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Lincoln Center—"Composers Recordings, Inc.: Forty Years of Discovery, 1954-94." Opens Oct. 7. . . . ¶ "New Performance in Found Spaces: Documentary Photographs by Tom Brazil and Dona Ann McAdams" features Brazil and McAdams' pictures of performance art from the early seventies to today, as well as black-and-white shots by Peter Moore (1932-94) of "happenings." (Open Mondays and Thursdays, noon to 8; Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays, noon to 6.)

P.S. 1, 46-01 21st St., Long Island City—"Alternating 1 to 100 and vice versa." A project, based on grids and mathematical equations, of the Italian Conceptualist Alighiero e Boetti. Opens Oct. 9. . . . ¶ "The Winter of Love." From the editors of the Parisian magazine *Purple Prose* comes a continually changing, multitheme show. Opens Oct. 9. (Open Thursdays through Sundays, noon to 6.)

Schomburg Center, 515 Lenox Ave., at 135th St.—"Invoking the Spirit: Worship Traditions in the African World." Photographs by Chester Higgins, Jr. . . . ¶ "Art in the Service of the Lord: Sacred Art of the Black Church." Contemporary art with religious themes. (Open Mondays through Wednesdays, noon to 8; Thursdays through Saturdays, 10 to 6; Sundays, 1 to 5.)

Socrates Sculpture Park, Broadway at Vernon Blvd., Long Island City—"International '94" includes work by Gunilla Bandolin, Mark di Suvero, and Nancy Rubins. Opens Oct. 9. (Open daily, 10 to sunset.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Tuesdays through Saturdays, from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6. The following lists lead off with new shows.)

Donald McLaughlin—Paintings of stripes, dots, and ovals adrift on an abstract background. Opens Oct. 6. Through Oct. 29. (M-13, at 72 Greene St.)

Jan Sawka—Pattern paintings with images of a bird; shown in Paris in 1978. Opens Oct. 8. Through Oct. 28. (Z, 70 Greene St.)

Alan Siegel—Chair sculptures. Opens Oct. 8. Through Nov. 9. (Hoffman, 429 West Broadway.)

Kay WalkingStick—Landscapes with abstract symbols. Opens Oct. 6. Through Nov. 8. (Kelly, 591 Broadway.)

•

John Chamberlain—Splendid new works roiling with weird polychrome intensity, by the master of smashed automobile parts as sculpture. Casually but decisively accessing the gestural braggadocio of Abstract Expressionism and the cool vernacular spirit of Pop, Chamberlain's sculptures are prime examples of hybrid vigor. His work still looks fresh after all these years. Check out the swathe of nifty leopard spots in "Urban Garlic" (1994)—it takes a certain élan to be so breathlessly and unaffectedly tacky. Through Oct. 15. (Pace, 142 Greene St.)

Nancy Grossman—These collages are so traditional that they might have been an end-of-term art-school project, but boy, does Grossman know what she's doing. "Fire Fields" are based on the artist's aerial observations of volcanoes during a recent visit to Hawaii. Constrasting hard and feathery edges and almost meaty layering are used to create a sense of deep space. "Collapsing Fire Field II," for example, combines torn photographs of leather-fetish paraphernalia (which Grossman used in her well-known head sculptures) with arresting expanses of red paper, to render a shimmering landscape. Through Oct. 15. (Ledisflam, 130 Prince St.)

Rosemarie Trockel—In "Typical Work," this German artist reprises her previous installations, using an altered scale and different mediums. The show's highlight is a video called "Continental Divide," in which Trockel plays a relentless interrogator demanding of a seated woman "Who is the best artist?" while slapping her around and yanking her hair. "Don't make me flaming mad," Trockel sputters. "I'm fed up with you. Don't make me sick!" Through Oct. 15. (Gladstone, 99 Greene St.)

"Let the Artist Live!"—Fifteen artists from the United States and abroad have been given areas in the gallery to live and work in, engaging the public in the process. The transformation of art space into living space isn't new; artists have been playing variations on this theme at least since Oldenburg's "Store" of 1961. What's striking about Exit Art's project is the sense of lazy haphazardness, as if the gallery were simply in the process of installing a show rather than self-consciously serving as a stage for artists' "lives." There are, however, a few telltale signs of real life: on a recent Tuesday morning, one man rolled up a futon, another brewed coffee in a makeshift kitchen. Through Oct. 22. (Exit Art, 548 Broadway.)

THE LORENZINI COLLAR
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– Claus A. Froh

ART–Cont'd

Open Tuesdays through Thursdays until 8, and Fridays and Saturdays until 10.)

Louise Bourgeois—An installation titled "The Red Rooms." Through Dec. 15. (A show of the artist's prints is on view at the Museum of Modern Art.) (Blum, 99 Wooster St.)

Dale Chihuly—A show of brilliant-colored glass sculptures, the highlight of which is "Maccia Forest," an installation on pedestals. (The artist's wall installation is currently on view at the Brooklyn Museum.) Through Oct. 15. (Cowles, 420 West Broadway.)

John de Fazio—Three porcelain sculptures resembling urinals. Through Oct. 22. (Grey Art Gallery, New York University, 33 Washington Pl. Open Wednesdays until 8:30.)

Jane Hammond—Paintings using appropriated imagery and based on titles for poems written for the artist by John Ashbery. Through Nov. 5. (Freire, 130 Prince St.)

Lari Pittman—Bright-colored, explosive paintings with recurrent images of devilish-looking Puritans, credit cards, and wiseacre phrases ("Cum n' Git It!"). Through Oct. 29. (Gorney Modern, 100 Greene St.)

Tony Smith (1912-80)—Small abstract paintings and sculptures from the fifties and sixties. Through Nov. 5. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

Cy Twombly—"Untitled Painting," a monumental, primarily abstract triptych, begun in Italy in 1979. Through Dec. 17. (A complementary retrospective of the artist's work is at the Museum of Modern Art.) (Gagosian, 136 Wooster St.)

Franz West—An installation titled "Home Elements (A Retrospective)" includes sculpture, furniture, and works on paper and invites viewer interaction. Through Oct. 22. (Zwirner, 43 Greene St.)

Brenda Zlamany—Male portraits and paintings of dead birds. Through Oct. 15. (Donahue, 560 Broadway.)

Gallery Group—An installation of maps painted on children's beds by Guillermo Kuitca, two beeswax houses by Wolfgang Laib, an igloo sculpture by Mario Merz, and carved limestone figures by Mimmo Paladino. Through Oct. 22. (Sperone Westwater, 142 Greene St.)

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Xavier Corbero—Nine buttonholes made of white marble and one gigantic stone button, by a Spanish sculptor. Opens Oct. 5. Through Oct. 29. (Blum Helman, 20 W. 57th St.)

Elaine de Kooning (1920-89)—Portraits of artists and writers from the forties and fifties, among them the artist's husband, Willem de Kooning, and Harold Rosenberg. Two self-portraits are also included. Opens Oct. 5. Through Nov. 19. (Washburn, 20 W. 57th St.)

Joellyn Duesberry—Landscape scenes from Maine to Colorado, where the artist lives. Opens Oct. 8. Through Oct. 29. (Graham, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.)

Larry Homolka—A show featuring recent acrylics with collage elements, based on an eighteenth-century book that the artist discovered in Amalfi. Opens Oct. 6. Through Oct. 29. (La Boetie, 9 E. 82nd St. Opens at noon.)

Virginia Jaramillo—Small-scale constructions made of shredded linoleum. Opens Oct. 7. Through Oct. 29. (Drake, 50 W. 57th St.)

Leonid Lerman—Sculptures and wall reliefs made of gold leaf, copper, and wood, transposing the Trojan War into a contemporary context. Opens Oct. 5. Through Nov. 5. (McKee, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Joan Mitchell (1926-92)—Sombre paintings from 1964, following the death of this Abstract Expressionist's father. Opens Oct. 11. Through Nov. 12. (Robert Miller, 41 E. 57th St.)

•

Lorenzo Cardi—Ghostly charcoal drawings and oil-on-wood paintings by a young Italian artist. Cardi shrinks from modernism, preferring to indulge in an adept, sensual pastiche of past masters. Through Oct. 22. (McCoy, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Manny Farber—In paintings of what seem to be tabletops, the artist toys with the ambiguities of two- and three-dimensional space. Fruits and vegetables, scrawled notes, and bouquets of flowers commingle in a state of managed chaos against bipartite abstract grounds. The abstraction-versus-representation dichotomy that Farber mines is not new, but his palette, alternately acidic and pastel, enlivens the project. Through Oct. 15. (Frumkin-Adams, 50 W. 57th St.)

Fernando Botero—Drawings spanning twenty years and corresponding to the artist's paintings and sculptures of gargantuan figures. Through Oct. 22. (Marian Goodman, 41 E. 57th St. Open Mondays.)

Willard Dixon / Mark Workman—Spare still-lifes, some as simple as three bowls on a ledge. / Lancaster County farm scenes. Through Oct. 22. (Fischbach, 24 W. 57th St.)

Fausto Melotti (1901-86)—Sculptures, dating from 1936 to the year of this Italian artist's death. They range from freestanding geometric pieces to abstract figurative works. Through Nov. 12. (Baldacci, 41 E. 57th St.)

Jules Olitski—A dozen new abstract paintings. Through Oct. 29. (Salander-O'Reilly, 20 E. 79th St.)

Sylvia Sleigh—Paintings of male nudes. Through Oct. 29. (Stiebel Modern, 32 E. 57th St.)

Sarah Supplee—Paintings and pastels of New York State farms. Through Oct. 28. (Tatistcheff, 50 W. 57th St.)

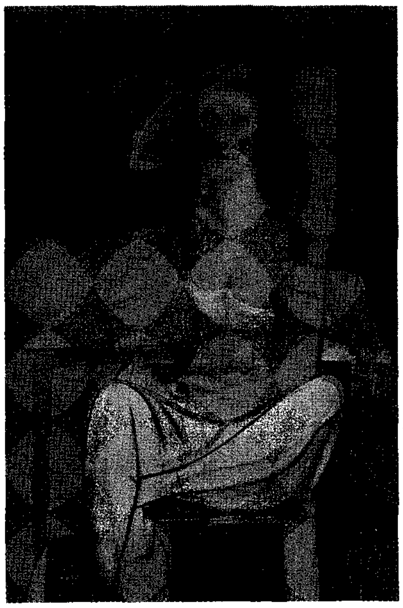
Pavel Tchelitchew (1898-1957)—A survey of the Russian artist's work from the twenties, when he was influenced by the School of Paris, to his Surrealist period in New York during the fifties. A focal point is the monumental painting "Hide-and-Seek," on loan from the Museum of Modern Art. Through Nov. 5. (Midtown-Payson, 745 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Celebrating
de Kooning

J.P. Morgan is proud to sponsor *Willem de Kooning: Paintings.* It's the first major international exhibition devoted exclusively to the paintings of one of the most important figures in 20th-century art.

Organized by the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., in association with the Tate Gallery, London, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, the exhibition features more than seventy-five works that trace de Kooning's artistic evolution and mastery of painting over five decades.

View *Willem de Kooning: Paintings* at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, from October 11, 1994 through January 8, 1995.



Seated Woman, c.1940, Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Albert M. Greenfield and Elizabeth M. Greenfield Collection

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Solo Szarkowski

THE show of pictures by John Szarkowski at Pace/MacGill (32 East 57th Street; through October 22) offers a chance to see another side of one of the most intriguing and contentious figures in the medium. In 1962, Szarkowski succeeded Edward Steichen as the director of the Department of Photography at the Museum of Modern Art, and over time he became better known for that role than as a photographer. (As a curator, some found him inspiring, others infuriating.) During his tenure at MOMA—he retired in 1991—Szarkowski effectively put his picture-taking career on hold. This is his first one-man show in New York.

The pictures are from the late forties through the early sixties. Many of the images were shot for two books: "The Idea of Louis Sullivan" (1956), a photo-essay about the architect's work, and "The Face of Minnesota" (1958).

Whether of landscapes, buildings, grain elevators, or everyday life, Szarkowski's photographs reflect the man's singular perspective. His vision is not about grandstanding; his choice of subjects and the way he handles scale, perspective, and detail demonstrate that grandeur isn't necessary to signify beauty and grace. Szarkowski's scenes of his dog hanging out in the back yard, for example, make paradise out of the most modest materials, and could make one give up dreams of doing something great. On the other hand, there's at least one reminder that this is the photographic big time: the dog's name is Mathew—for Mathew Brady.

HENRI CARTIER-BRESSON—Photographs of Paris, from 1930 to 1980, by the French master. Through Oct. 22. (Danziger, 130 Prince St.)

LESLIE GILL (1908-58)—Images by a photographer best known for his work for *Harper's Bazaar.* Through Oct. 22. (Mann, 42 E. 76th St.)

JANINE NIEPCE—Black-and-white photographs of French country life, taken primarily in the fifties and sixties. Through Oct. 22. (Witkin, 415 West Broadway.)

ANDRES SERRANO—Recent photographs of Budapest. Through Oct. 26. (Cooper, 155 Wooster St.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY, 1130 Fifth Ave. at 94th St.—A retrospective of the work of Cornell Capa, featuring images from *Life* and other magazines. . . . ¶ Forty images of contemporary Russian life, by Hans-Jürgen Burkhard. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

INTERNATIONAL CENTER OF PHOTOGRAPHY MIDTOWN, Sixth Ave. at 43rd St.—"Talking Pictures," an exhibition that features images by more than fifty people not generally associated with photography—Mario Cuomo, Jesse Jackson, Diane Keaton—and taped commentaries on the work. . . . ¶ Photographs by Arthur Rothstein, who is best known for his work for *Look.* . . . ¶ More than thirty black-and-white photographs of Appalachian Kentuckians, by Shelby Lee Adams. (Open daily, except Mondays, 11 to 6, and Tuesday evenings until 8.)

(See the museum listings for photography exhibitions at the Metropolitan Museum, the Museum of Modern Art, Goethe House, the Museum of the City of New York, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, and the Schomburg Center.

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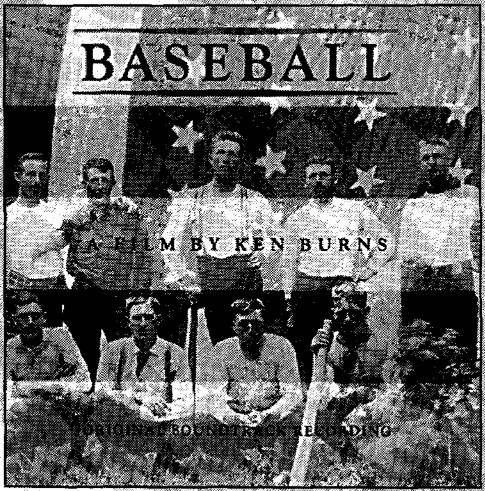

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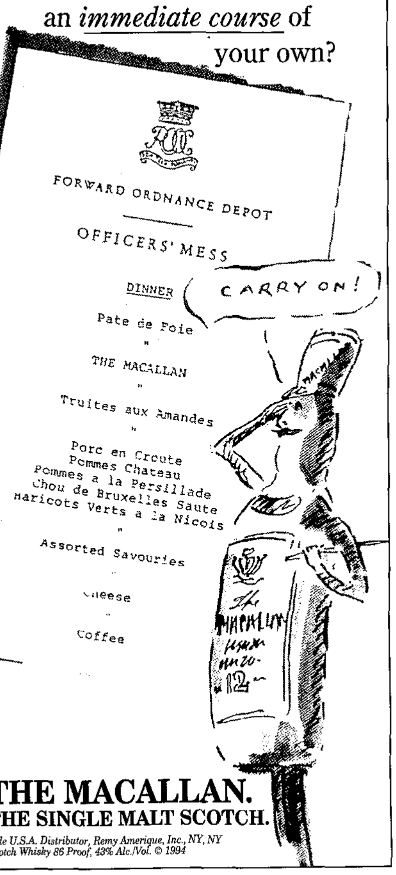
A MILITARY SALUTE

Our gallant friend Colonel Y, a Highland Officer, recounts how he recently travelled on his military duties to a Camp in Germany. He took with him a bottle of The Macallan Malt Whisky which he duly presented to the President of the Mess, suggesting that the assembled officers have a glass each with the First Course on Dinner Night.

The President was so impressed with the glorious aroma that billowed from the opened bottle (*The Macallan is the last Malt Whisky* to be matured the traditional way *exclusively* in sherry casks) that he insisted they should treat it as a special and separate course. The result we here append — a fitting tribute to The Macallan and the dashing officer who brought such comfort to the troops. Surely conduct to be emulated with an *immediate course* of your own?



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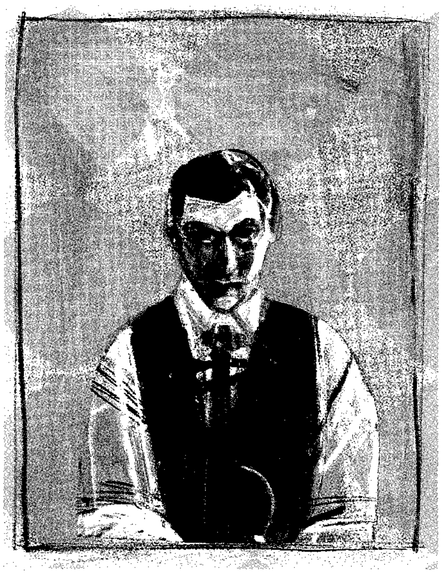
CLASSICAL MUSIC

The Kindness of Strangers

A YOUNG violinist aspiring to a solo career needs an extraordinary amount of talent, stamina, and luck—and a substantial trust fund wouldn't hurt, either. These days, a Stradivarius might put a three-million-dollar dent in your wallet; and a really fine bow could set you back another forty or fifty thousand—which is about how much your pianist friends are spending for their major-league Steinways. Fortunately, music-loving philanthropists sometimes step in to bridge the gap between the superstar in training and the instrument he needs.



Maxim Vengerov.

One beneficiary of this kind of largesse is Maxim Vengerov, a Siberian, who will appear as soloist in Bruch's G-Minor Concerto with the Pittsburgh Symphony, on October 11 at Carnegie Hall. In the bountiful crop of fine violinists now coming of age, the fleet-fingered Vengerov stands out. He's no stranger to good instruments; by the time he was ten, he was already playing Paganini on a half-sized Strad. A decade later—he turned twenty in August—he's still a Strad man, but only a very full-sized instrument could stand up to his prodigious technique and put across his imaginative musicality. At Carnegie Hall, he'll play on the Le Reynier Stradivarius, built in Cremona in 1727; the same instrument serves him with distinction in a remarkable series of recordings on the Teldec label. He can't afford such a fiddle himself, of course—at least, not yet. Meanwhile, he and his audiences can thank the French firm of Moët Hennessy-Louis Vuitton, which owns a collection of several fine violins, and is both wise and generous enough to lend them to deserving musicians.

(The box-office number for the Metropolitan Opera is 362-6000; for Carnegie Hall and Weill Recital Hall, 247-7800; for Merkin Concert Hall, 129 W. 67th St., 362-8719; and for the 92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St., 996-1100.)

OPERA

METROPOLITAN OPERA—**TOSCA,** with Carol Vaness, Luciano Pavarotti, and Sherrill Milnes; conducted by James Levine. (Oct. 5 and Oct. 8 at 8.) . . . **LA BOHÈME,** with Angela Gheorghiu, Lauren Flanigan, Richard Leech, and Timothy Noble; Michelangelo Veltri. (Oct. 6 at 8.) . . . **IDOMENEO,** with Luciana Serra, Hei-Kyung Hong, Susanne Mentzer, Plácido Domingo, and Ryland Davies; Mr. Levine. (Oct. 7 and Oct. 10 at 8.) . . . **RIGOLETTO,** with Young Ok Shin, Ramon Vargas, and Juan Pons; Christian Badea. (Oct. 8 at 1:30 and Oct. 11 at 8.) (Metropolitan Opera House.)

NEW YORK CITY OPERA—**IL BARBIERE DI SIVIGLIA,** with Erie Mills, Charles Workman, Louis Otey, and Joseph McKee; conducted by Joseph Colaneri. (Oct. 6 and Oct. 11 at 8.) . . . **CARMEN,** with Jean Stilwell, Abbie Furmansky, Michael Hayes, and Robert Perry; Semyon Vekshtein. (Oct. 7 at 8.) . . . **TOSCA,** with Eva Zseller, Vincenzo Scuderi, and Harry Dworchak; Christopher Keene. (Oct. 8 at 1:30.) . . . **MEFISTOFELE,** by Boito, with Maryanne Telese, Jeanne-Michèle Charbonnet, Allan Glassman, and Stephen West; Mr. Keene. (Oct. 8 at 8.) . . . **LAKMÉ,** with Elizabeth Futral, Julia Anne Wolf, Richard Drews, Ron Baker, and Joseph Corteggiano; Scott Bergeson. (Oct. 9 at 1:30.) (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. With supertitles in English.)

DICAPO OPERA THEATRE—Presenting Puccini's "Gianni Schicchi." (184 E. 76th St. 288-9438. Oct. 7-8 at 8.)

AMATO OPERA COMPANY—Final performances of "La Bohème." (Amato Opera Theatre, 319 Bowery, at 2nd St. 228-8200. Oct. 8 at 7:30 and Oct. 9 at 2:30.)

ORCHESTRAS AND CHORUSES

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC—Kurt Masur conducts Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade" and the United States première of Minoru Miki's "Symphony for Two Worlds," with the Pro Musica Nipponia, an ensemble of traditional Japanese instruments. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 6-8 at 8. . . . **NOTE:** Pro Musica Nipponia will offer pre-concert recitals, open to ticket holders, each evening at 7.)

JUILLIARD ORCHESTRA—Otto-Werner Mueller conducts Ravel's "Le Tombeau de Couperin" and G-Major Piano Concerto (with Anna Emilova Stoytcheva), Robert Beaser's "Chorale Variations," and Strauss's "Tod und Verklärung." (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 5 at 8.)

MANNES ORCHESTRA—Michael Charry conducts Smetana's "The Bartered Bride" Overture, Haydn's Symphony No. 104, Cowell's Synchrony, and Rachmaninoff's "Rhapsody on a Theme by Paganini" (with pianist Pei-wen Chen). (Symphony Space, Broadway at 95th St. Oct. 6 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

NEW YORK POPS—Skitch Henderson conducts a forties nostalgia trip; with the Glenn Miller Orchestra. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 7 at 8.)

RUSSIAN CHAMBER CHORUS OF NEW YORK—Nikolai Kachanov directs the première of Viktor Copytsko's Mass for the Feast of St. Francis. (Church of the Good Shepherd, 240 E. 31st St. Oct. 7 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC PHILHARMONIA—Glen Cortese conducts Brahms' "Tragic Overture," Ravel's "Daphnis et Chloé Suite No. 2," and Respighi's "The Pines of Rome" and "The Fountains of Rome." (Borden Auditorium, Manhattan School of Music, Broadway at 122nd St. Oct. 8 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

CITY ISLAND BAROQUE ENSEMBLE—Ilan Rechtman and Max Barros take to the harpsichord

ANDREA VENTURA

and the fortepiano to play two of Bach's double concertos; violinist Chin Kim plays Corelli's variations on "La Follia." (Le Refuge Inn, 620 City Island Ave., City Island, the Bronx. 1-718 885-2478. Oct. 9 at noon.)

Pittsburgh Symphony—Lorin Maazel conducts Anthony Davis's "Notes from the Underground," Bruch's G-Minor Violin Concerto (with Maxim Vengerov), and Beethoven's Symphony No. 6. (Carnegie Hall. Oct. 11 at 8.)

Concert Royal—James Richman directs an all-Bach program comprising the A-Minor Violin Concerto (with Lisa Rautenberg) and Cantatas Nos. 10, 140, 202 (with soprano Tamara Crout Matthews), and 82 (with baritone Kevin Deas); with the Princeton Pro Musica Chamber Chorus. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 11 at 8.)

RECITALS

Lisa Kozenko—Oboist, playing works by Bach, Britten, Amilcare Ponchielli, and others; with pianist Dana Burnett. (St. Bartholomew's Church, Park Ave. at 50th St. Oct. 5 at 6:30. Tickets at the door on the evening of the concert. . . . ¶ St. Paul's Chapel, Broadway at Fulton St. Oct. 6 at noon. No tickets necessary.)

Musicians Accord—Performing folk-inspired chamber music by Berio (his "Folk Songs," featuring soprano Christine Schadeberg), Cage ("The Perilous Night," for prepared piano), Stravinsky ("Chants Russes"), Cowell, Piazzolla, Steve Reich, and Tania León. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Oct. 5 at 8. No tickets necessary.)

Russell Sherman—The pianist, who is currently engaged in recording all of Beethoven's piano sonatas, offers an all-Beethoven program comprising the Sonatas in D Minor (Op. 31, No. 2, the "Tempest"), F Major (Op. 54), and C Minor (Op. 111), as well as the "Eroica" Variations and Fugue (Op. 35). (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 5 at 8.)

LISTENING BOOTH

Vaughan Williams: "Hugh the Drover" (Hyperion). Though Ralph Vaughan Williams started composing his two-act opera "Hugh the Drover" in 1910, he tinkered with it for another forty-five years, never completely satisfied with its numerous stagings. It's an evenhanded but affectionate musical tale of life, love, and personal independence in an English village, and it leaves the listener with a sense of what "Die Meistersinger" might have been if it had been cast as a ballad opera. The elaborately orchestrated music, much of it derived from the traditional songs that the composer found engrossing, is as luscious as a warm scone. Conductor Matthew Best, who has developed a specialty in the composer's œuvre, leads as fine a performance as this endearing, willfully unsophisticated score is likely to get; and tenor Bonaventura Bottone's interpretation of the title role is a standout in every way.

Kalichstein-Laredo-Robinson Trio—Performing piano trios by Beethoven (in G Major, Op. 1, No. 2), Turina (his Second), and Brahms (in C Major). (92nd Street Y. Oct. 5 at 8.)

Stephen Hamilton—Organist, performing Clérambault's "Suite de Deuxième Ton," Bach's G-Minor Fantasy and Fugue (BWV 542), Dupré's B-Major Prelude and Fugue and "Variations sur un Noël," as well as works by Böhm and Kenton Coe. (Church of the Holy Trinity, 316 E. 88th St. 289-4100. Oct. 5 at 8.)

Bargemusic—Cellist Ronald Thomas and pianist Joseph Villa perform Grieg's Cello Sonata; violinist Scott St. John joins them for Schumann's "Fantasiestücke" (Op. 88) and G-Minor Trio. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. 1-718 624-4061. Oct. 6 at 7:30 and Oct. 9 at 4.)

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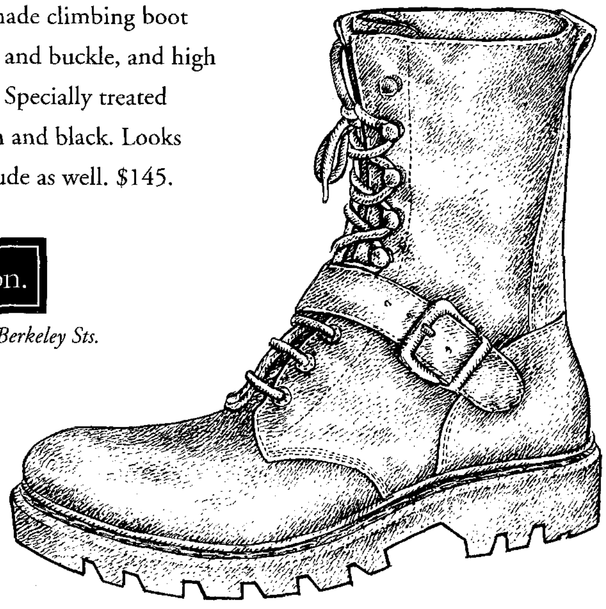

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CLASSICAL MUSIC–Cont'd

Parnassus—Presenting Berg's "Four Pieces for Clarinet and Piano," Carter's "Triple Duo," Babbitt's "Tutte le Corde," and the premières of works by Matthew Greenbaum and Maurice Wright. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 6 at 8.)

Robert De Gaetano—Pianist, performing Prokofiev's Toccata (Op. 11), Beethoven's E-Major Sonata (Op. 109), works by Chopin and Liszt, and premières of several of his own compositions. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 6 at 8.)

Beaux Arts Trio—Performing piano trios by Mozart (in C Major, K. 548), Turina (his First), and Dvořák (the "Dumky"). (Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 83rd St. 570-3949. Oct. 7-8 at 8.)

New York Festival of Song—Presenting songs by American composers, including Bernstein, Blitzstein, and Bolcom. (92nd Street Y. Oct. 8 at 8.)

Carlos Barbosa-Lima and Jorge Morel—Classical guitarists, performing works by Ginastera, Gershwin, Piazzolla, and many others. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 8 at 8:30.)

Pro Musica Nipponia—The Japanese modern-music ensemble plays music by Minoru Miki. (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th St. 854-7799. Oct. 9 at 3.)

Ambrosia Trio—The piano trio performs Martinů's "Bergerettes" and Schumann's Trio in D Minor. (Riverside Church, Riverside Dr. at 120th St. Oct. 9 at 3. Admission by contribution.)

Music Before 1800—Two of New York's hometown ensembles—Lionheart (a male sextet) and Ex Umbris (a vocal and instrumental quartet)—join forces for the opening concert of the city's premier early-music series, performing sacred and secular music from Renaissance Ferrara, including works by Josquin, Obrecht (movements from his Missa "Fortuna Desperata"), and many others. (Corpus Christi Church, 529 W. 121st St. 666-9266. Oct. 9 at 4.)

Salon Soirées—Cellist Alexis Gerlach and pianist Ilan Rechtman perform works by François Francoeur, Bach, Rachmaninoff, and David Popper. (Hotel Wales, Madison Ave. at 92nd St. Oct. 9 at 6 and 8. Admission is free, but call 876-6000 to reserve a seat.)

Catskill Chamber Players—Presenting music by Vivian Fine, including her Missa Brevis and Cello Sonata, as well as works by Villa-Lobos, Carleton Clay, and Michael Finckel. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 9 at 8:30.)

Combattimento Consort Amsterdam—The Dutch early-music group performs works by Bach, Telemann, Biber, and Rameau. (Merkin Concert Hall. Oct. 10 at 7:30.)

Meridian String Quartet—Oboist Marcia Butler joins members of the ensemble in the oboe quartets of Mozart (in F Major) and Britten (Op. 2, "The Phantasy"). (Turtle Bay Music School, 244 E. 52nd St. 753-8811. Oct. 11 at 7:30.)

Anup Kumar Biswas—Cellist, performing sonatas by Beethoven (his Second), Rachmaninoff, and Shostakovich, as well as premières of his own compositions ("Reflections for Cello and Piano" and "A Boatman's Song for Cello and Piano") and a work by John Craig Cooper; with pianist Stephen Gutman. (Weill Recital Hall. Oct. 11 at 8.)

New Millenium Ensemble—Performing twentieth-century music by John Lessard (the première of his "Quintet"), David Rakowski (the New York première of his "Hyperblue"), John Heiss, Harbison (his "The Natural World," with mezzo-soprano Mary Nessinger), Wuorinen, and Schoenberg (his Chamber Symphony, Op. 9, as arranged by Webern). (Ethical Culture Society, 2 W. 64th St. Oct. 11 at 8. Tickets at the door on the night of the concert.)

Jeffrey Siegel—The pianist plays, and talks about, American piano works by Gershwin, Bernstein, Joplin, Barber, Griffes, and others. (92nd Street Y. Oct. 11 at 8.)

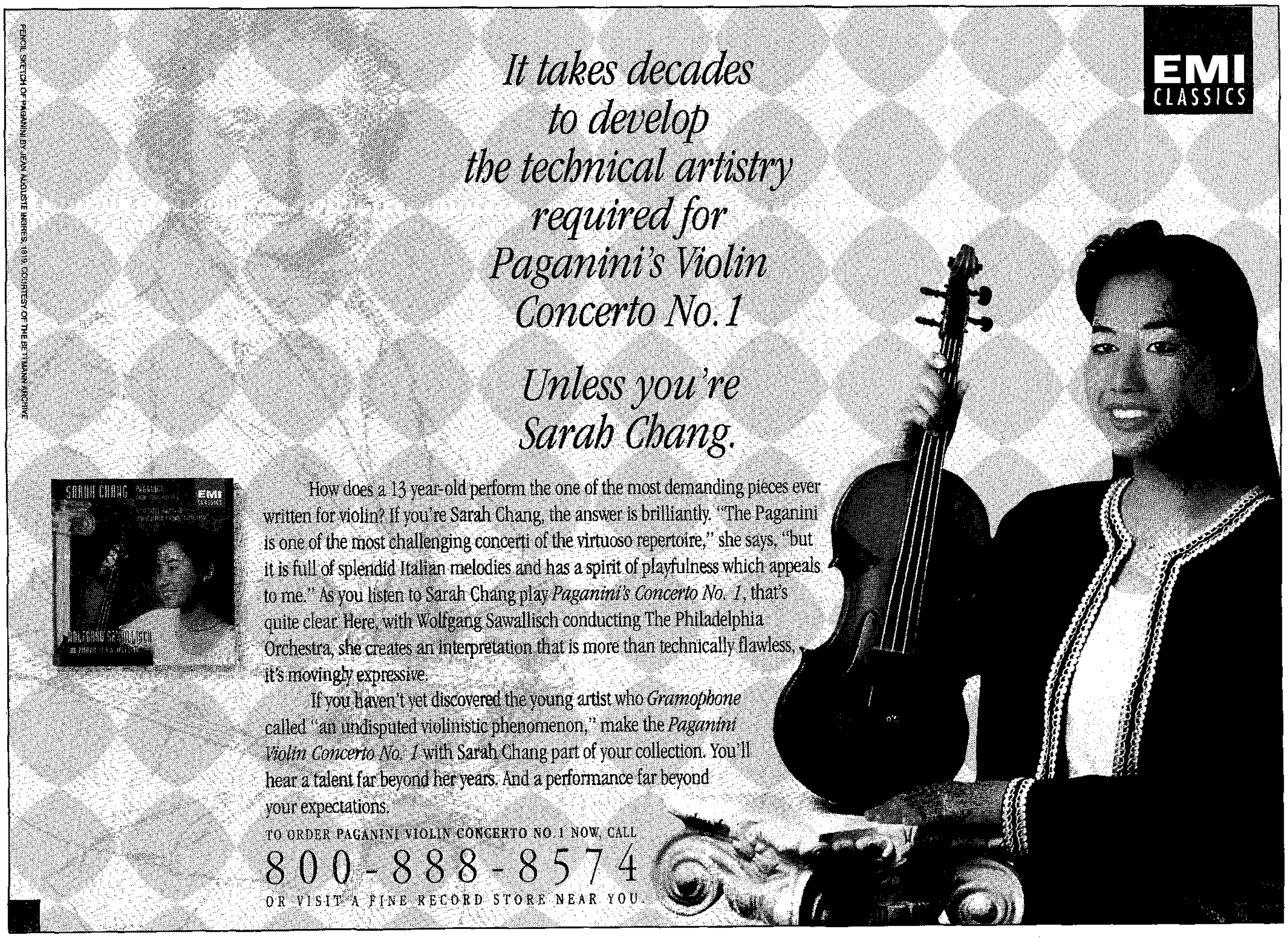
ABOVE AND BEYOND

Sailing Uptown—Five hundred and two years after Columbus's landfall on these shores, his parade lives on. On Oct. 10 at 10:15, marchers will leave Fifth Ave. at 44th St., proceed north (past the reviewing stand at 69th St.), and head east on 86th St. as far as Third Ave. High-school bands and fraternal organizations, among other civic groups, will be led by Grand Marshal Susan Lucci, of "All My Children" fame. . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 1: Big Onion Walking Tours will focus on discoveries and firsts in lower Manhattan. For more information, call 439-1090.

Tutu—Archbishop Desmond Tutu begins a ten-day speaking tour of the United States in New York, at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. An evening in honor of the Archbishop will include a performance by the Brooklyn Philharmonic, conducted by Lukas Foss; dance by the Harlem School of the Arts; and singing by Shirley Verrett. (Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. Oct. 8 at 5. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ James Hoge, Jr., editor of *Foreign Affairs*, will interview Mr. Tutu. (Congregation Rodeph Sholom, 7 W. 83rd St. Oct. 11 at 8. For tickets, call 996-1100.)

Praguesque—Rose Styron, Kurt Vonnegut, and others will read from the works of Franz Kafka and Karel Čapek, among other Czech writers, in "Past to Present: Prophecy of the Writers of the 1920s," part of a two-month-long celebration of Prague. (Stuyvesant High School auditorium, 345 Chambers St., at West St., Battery Park City. Oct. 6 at 6:30. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ For information on related events, including videos and gallery shows, at the World Financial Center and other locations, call 945-0505.

Subcontinental—Throughout India, the Mother Goddess's victory over evil is commemorated with several days of festivities. Rhythm of India will celebrate Garba '94 with traditional dance and music. (Flushing Mead-



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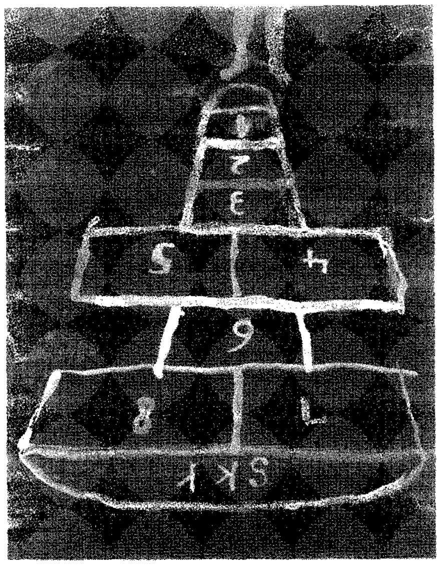
ows–Corona Park. Oct. 7-9 and Oct. 15-16, from 8 P.M. to 1 A.M. For more information, call 1-718 803-3333.) . . . ¶ At the American Museum of Natural History, films, lectures, and performances will give visitors a taste of this Indian celebration. (Central Park W. at 79th St. Oct. 8-9 and Oct. 15-16. For schedule information, call 769-5315.)

Raining Cats—Cartoonist Victoria Roberts, a frequent contributor to these pages, will paint and discuss her cat umbrellas. (Whitney Museum Store Next Door, 943 Madison Ave., at 74th St. Oct. 5-6, from 5 to 6. No tickets necessary.)

Multimedia—Music, a short-story reading, and a performance of a one-act play, "Now What? What Now?," to celebrate the publication of the fifth issue of the magazine *A Gathering of the Tribes*. (Nuyorican Poets Café, 236 E. 3rd St. 674-3778. Oct. 8 at 11:30 P.M.)

By Hand—Each year, Crafts on Columbus forms its semicircle of booths behind the American Museum of Natural History, offering jewelry, games, and clothes, among other crafts. (Columbus Ave. between 77th and 81st Sts. Oct. 8-9 and Oct. 15-16, from 10 to 5:30. No tickets necessary.)



KATE SHEPHERD

Drawing Out the Quarterly—Two readings to celebrate the recently resuscitated literary magazine *The Quarterly*. Oct. 7 at 8: Victoria Redel, Christine Schutt, and Jason Schwartz. (West Side Y, 5 W. 63rd St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 7: Brian Evenson, Thomas Glynn, and Ms. Redel. (Limbo, 47 Avenue A, at 4th St. No tickets necessary.)

Readings—Oct. 5 at 8: Anne Hollander will read from her book "Sex and Suits." (A Different Light, 151 W. 19th St. No tickets necessary.) . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 8: Amiri Baraka and Victor Hernandez Cruz will read from their own poetry. (St. Mark's In-the-Bouwerie, Second Ave. at 10th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 8: Kamau Brathwaite and Allen Ginsberg will read from their own poetry. (New School, 66 W. 12th St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 8: Sam Shepard will read from his own writing. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 8: Bill Evans, Susan Montez, and Michele Morgan Somerville will read from their own poetry. (Dixon Place, 258 Bowery, near Houston St. Tickets at the door on the night of the reading.) . . . ¶ Oct. 10 at 8: Alice Munro and Carol Shields will read from their own fiction. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 996-1100.) . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 6: Aidan Higgins will read from his work in progress. (Glucksman Ireland House, New York University, 1 Washington Mews. No tickets necessary.)

Mod Squad—Oct. 5 at 6:30: Neil Jenney, whose landscapes are currently on exhibit at the Whitney, will talk about his work with David Ross, the museum's director. (Madison Ave. at 75th St. 606-0211.) . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 8: Kirk Varnedoe will give a talk titled "Rethinking Cy Twombly." (Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St. 708-9795.)

Talks—Oct. 5 at 6: Martha Nussbaum will give a talk titled "Citizens of the World: A Classical Defense of Radical Reform in Higher Education." (New York Public Library, Fifth Ave. at 42nd St. 930-0571.) . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 7: Derek Mahon will talk about and read from the poetry of Louis MacNeice. (Poets House, 72 Spring St. Tickets at the door on the night of the talk.)

Walks & Tours—Oct. 9 at 1: Radical Walking Tours will give its first tour of the Lower East Side. For more information, call 1-718 492-0069. . . . ¶ Oct. 9 at 1:45: Friends of the Parks will take in Con Edison's Ravenswood Station, in Long Island City. For more information, call 473-6283.

SPORTS

FOOTBALL

Giants—Vs. the Minnesota Vikings, Oct. 10 at 9.

Jets—Vs. the Indianapolis Colts, Oct. 9 at 1.

HOCKEY

Strike Two?—The players and owners are at it again, only this time it's hockey, and if you were consoling yourself for the aborted baseball season by thinking, Hey, hockey is just around the corner—well, look out. As of press time, there was a very real possibility that the major-league ice-hockey season wouldn't even make it as far as the opening face-off.

Rangers—Vs. the Philadelphia Flyers, Oct. 6. . . . ¶ Vs. the Tampa Bay Lightning, Oct. 11. (Game time, 7:30.)

Islanders—Vs. the Ottawa Senators, Oct. 7 at 7:30.

Devils—Vs. the Ottawa Senators, Oct. 8 at 7:30.

(The Giants and the Jets play at Giants Stadium, the Meadowlands, 1-201 935-8111; the Rangers at Madison Square Garden, 465-6000; the Devils at the Meadowlands Arena, 1-201 935-3900; and the Islanders at Nassau Coliseum, 1-516 794-9300.)

HORSE RACING

Breeders' Cup Preview Day—Six stakes races are the climax of the New York racing season, on Oct. 8. The Breeders' Cup will be run at Churchill Downs on Nov. 5. (Belmont Park, Elmont, L.I. For tickets, call 1-516 488-6000.)

FOR KIDS

(A list of activities for children and their parents or other adults.)

Museophiles—MOMA's Family Gallery Program addresses the topic "What's the Big Idea? Abstract Art," with a look at selections from the Cy Twombly exhibit as well as the permanent collection. (Edward John Noble Education Center, 18 W. 54th St. 708-9795. Oct. 8, from 10 to 11.)

Symphonic Pleasures—The New York Philharmonic presents its first Young People's Concert of the season, conducted by Kurt Masur. The composer Minoru Miki and his group, the Pro Musica Nipponia ensemble, join the Philharmonic as guest artists in a program that comprises traditional and contemporary Japanese music. Recommended ages: six to twelve. (Avery Fisher Hall. 875-5030. Oct. 8 at 2. . . . NOTE: Preceding the concert, at 1, is the Children's Promenade, which gives kids a chance to meet members of the orchestra and to get close to the instruments.)

"Little Red Ridinghood"—A musical version of the tale, for four-to-eleven-year-olds. (Queens Theatre in the Park, Flushing Meadows–Corona Park. 1-718 760-0064. Oct. 8 at 1.)

Ahoy, Mateys—A colloquium (for those aged six and older) on sailing ships takes place at the Children's Museum of Manhattan on Columbus Day, Oct. 10, at 1 and 3; participants will make paper ships to take home. (212 W. 83rd St. 721-1234.)

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THE MOVIES

FILMS OPENING THIS WEEK

Frosh—A documentary that follows the academic and social lives of ten freshmen at Stanford University. Directed by Dayna Goldfine and Dan Geller. Opening October 5. (Cinema Village.)

Only You—Norman Jewison directed and Marisa Tomei stars in a romantic comedy about a young woman who abandons her fiancé and flies to Italy in search of her true love, whose name she discovered during a session with a Ouija board. With Robert Downey, Jr. Written by Diane Drake. Opening October 7. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, 34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Risk—A New York artist and part-time nude model (Karen Sillas) lets herself get picked up by a duplicitous stranger (David Ilku) whose true character begins to emerge after the couple steal a car and head out of town. With Molly Price and Jack Gwaltney. Written and directed by Deirdre Fishel. Opening October 5. (Quad Cinema and Angelika 57.)

The Specialist—Sharon Stone and Sylvester Stallone take on the Miami mob in this guns-and-bombs thriller. With James Woods, Eric Roberts, and Rod Steiger. Written by Alexandra Seros. Directed by Luis Llosa. Opening October 7. (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Gemini, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

Totally F*ed Up**—Gregg Araki ("The Living End") wrote and directed this rowdy comedy about the joys and travails of being a gay teen-ager in Los Angeles. Opening October 7. (Quad Cinema.)

CURRENT FILMS

(The signed notes are by Anthony Lane, Terrence Rafferty, and Michael Sragow. If a movie has been reviewed in The Current Cinema, the date of its review is given. Theatre addresses and phone numbers are listed on page 32.)

The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert—Paragons of camp become campers, of sorts, in this cult-pleasing tale of a transsexual (Terence Stamp) and two drag queens (Hugo Weaving and Guy Pearce) who take a lip-synching act from Sydney to a resort in arid central Australia. Stephan Elliott, the writer-director, has one original idea—posing creatures of the night in wild sunbaked settings. As crossover drag sagas go, it's neither as robustly funny as "La Cage aux Folles" nor as lively and poetic as the best parts of "Outrageous!"—M.S. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, New York Twin, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

The Advocate—A black comedy set in medieval France. With Colin Firth as an idealistic lawyer and Amina Annabi as the owner of a homicidal pig. Also with Nicol Williamson and Lysette Anthony. Written and directed by Leslie Megahey. (57th St. Playhouse.)

Barcelona—The second film by the writer and director Whit Stillman ("Metropolitan") is a culture-clash comedy about a pair of conservative young Americans (played by Taylor Nichols and Chris Eigeman) in early-eighties Barcelona. Although the picture begins promisingly, its charm peters out fast. Every scene seems to make the same not very interesting point: that Americans get a bum rap from foreigners. Stillman's style is placid and a little smug—prematurely gray. In just two movies he has found the sort of rut that most filmmakers take decades to settle into. Also with Tushka Bergen and Mira Sorvino.—T.R. (8/15/94) (Angelika Film Center, Eastside Playhouse, 23rd St. West Triplex, and Carnegie Hall Cinema.)

Blue Sky—The last movie directed by Tony Richardson—he died shortly after completing it, in 1991—is a fitting end to his long, erratically brilliant career. The picture is set in the early sixties. Tommy Lee Jones plays a quiet Army scientist assigned to a nuclear-testing project; Jessica Lange plays his volatile wife, to whom he is utterly, incomprehensibly devoted. Both actors are extraordinary; Lange's performance might be her best. The action feels contrived and a little fuzzy in the last half hour, but the movie is so strong that its flaws don't seem to matter. Richardson frames his stars' work with a mysterious tenderness, as if to reward them for vindicating his lifelong faith in the actor's art. His direction is a touching embodiment of the movie's theme: the rigors and the joys of constancy. Also with Amy Locane, Powers Boothe, Carrie Snodgress, Chris O'Donnell, and Anna Klemp. Screenplay by Rama Laurie Stagner, Arlene Sarner, and Jerry Leichtling.—T.R. (10/3/94) (19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Plaza, Orpheum VII, and Art Greenwich Twin. . . . ¶ Criterion Center; through Oct. 6.)

Café au Lait—The début feature from Mathieu Kassovitz, a young French director trying very hard not to be the Jewish Spike Lee, and only just succeeding. Kassovitz plays Félix, an annoying young bike messenger smitten by a dreamy young heroine (Julie Mauduech) who refuses to confine her charms to a single man. Félix has a rival for her affections, a wealthy black student (Hubert Kounde); after a raucous and unconvincing start, the movie settles down nicely into a good-natured love triangle. In French.—A.L. (9/12/94) (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Caro Diario—Nanni Moretti was named best director at Cannes for this first-person account of his daily life in Rome. The three sections of the film are titled "On My Vespa," "Islands," and "Doctors." In Italian. (Angelika Film Center and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Clear and Present Danger—Further adventures of Jack Ryan (Harrison Ford), the courageous and incorruptible C.I.A. analyst who is the hero of Tom Clancy's ungainly novels. The director, Phillip Noyce, whose "Patriot Games" (1992) was a surprisingly elegant Clancy adaptation, has once again taken a tub of prose and sweated it into a sleek, classically proportioned suspense picture. Also with Henry Czerny, Willem Dafoe, Donald Moffat, James Earl Jones, and Anne Archer.—T.R. (8/15/94) (Village East Cinemas, 34th Street Showplace, East 85th Street, 23rd St. West Triplex, Cinema 3, Metro Cinema, and Embassy.)

Corrina, Corrina—It's the fifties, and Ray Liotta is a widowed atheistic jingle writer searching for a housekeeper who can also play surrogate mommy for seven-year-old Tina Majorino. He lucks out with Whoopi Goldberg. She gives a varied, even jazzy performance as Ms. Wonderful. But the movie is hopelessly pedantic—chock-full of lessons about grief, racism, and, so help us, God. With Joan Cusack and Curtis Williams, Jr. Jessie Nelson produced, directed, and wrote the semi-autobiographical script.—M.S. (Cinema 3rd Avenue and Criterion Center.)

Eat Drink Man Woman—Another film comedy from Ang Lee, the director of "The Wedding Banquet." The aging Mr. Chu (Sihung Lung) is a widowed chef, living in Taipei

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CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

with his three daughters, each of whom is getting itchy for the world beyond. (Watch out for the exquisite Chien-Lien Wu as Jia-Chien, the pushiest of the three.) Mr. Chu is a King Lear of the kitchen: a master on his own ground, slapping fish around and blowing air into a boiled duck, but gradually losing his sense of taste and his power to rule. The movie is more likable than memorable; you come out running for the nearest restaurant. In Mandarin.—A.L. (Angelika Film Center, First & 62nd Cinemas, and Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

Ed Wood—Tim Burton's biography of the filmmaker who inflicted "Plan 9 from Outer Space" and "Glen or Glenda" on fifties moviegoers tries to persuade us that its hero is a sort of holy fool of cinema. The picture is superbly shot, in black-and-white, by Stefan Czapsky, and most of the actors—Bill Murray, Sarah Jessica Parker, Jeffrey Jones, and Martin Landau (as Bela Lugosi)—are engaging. But there's a strong whiff of pointlessness to the whole enterprise. Wood (played by Johnny Depp) is depicted as a wide-eyed, boyish innocent; his moviemaking fever doesn't feel like a mad passion—it's more like puppy love. Also with Patricia Arquette and Lisa Marie. Screenplay by Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski.—T.R. (10/3/94) (Sutton. . . . ¶ Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, 86th Street East Twin, and 84th Street Sixplex; starting Oct. 7.)

Johnny Depp in "Ed Wood."

Forrest Gump—As all the world now knows, Tom Hanks plays Forrest Gump, a simple Alabama soul who serves his country without hurting a fly; he saves his comrades in Vietnam, woos the dippy Jenny (Robin Wright), and runs back and forth across the continent. Hanks does his best to convince us that Gump is, in fact, a character, and not merely a bulging sack of virtues, but the movie takes the fight out of him. With Sally Field and Gary Sinise. Directed by Robert Zemeckis.—A.L. (7/25/94) (Village Theatre VII, 34th Street Showplace, Baronet, Orpheum VII, Chelsea Cinemas, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Fresh—A grim tale of New York youth fouled up in the drug trade. Fresh (Sean Nelson) runs heroin, plays truant, and annoys his family; finally, inspired by chess moves learned from his no-good father (Samuel L. Jackson), he turns the tables on two local dealers. Apart from one breathtaking spasm of violence at a basketball game, Boaz Yakin's first film is dulled by its own earnestness. Furious, but no fun.—A.L. (9/12/94) (Village East Cinemas and Embassy.)

I Don't Want to Talk About It—In this dark comedy, set in the nineteen-thirties, a stranger (Marcello Mastroianni) falls in love with a dwarf and scandalizes the residents of a Latin-American town. Written by Jorge Goldenberg and the director, Maria Luisa Bemberg. In Spanish. (68th St. Playhouse.)

Inevitable Grace—A campy comedy about murder, cross-dressing, and sexual game-playing among psychiatrists, mental patients, and other tormented characters. With Jennifer Nicholson, Stephanie Knights, Maxwell Caulfield, and Tippi Hedren. Written and directed by Alex Canawati. (Quad Cinema.)

Jason's Lyric—Jason (Allen Payne) is the hero; Lyric is the name of his lover (Jada Pinkett). The title is just one indication that Doug McHenry's tale of romance and death in Houston's inner city belongs on a double bill with John Singleton's "Poetic Justice." Like Singleton, McHenry and his screenwriter, Bobby Smith, Jr., strive for poetry and achieve doggerel. Jason and Lyric both have family problems. Jason's dad, Maddog (Forest Whitaker), seen in flashback, was a volatile Vietnam vet. His alcoholic brother, Joshua (Bokeem Woodbine), joins some aspiring bank robbers—who happen to be led by Alonzo (Treach), Lyric's brother. The held-back revelation of who killed Madog makes for the worst kind of trick Freudian melodrama.—M.S. (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 19th Street East 6, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Astor Plaza.)

Killing Zoe—The first-time director is Roger Avary, one of a new breed of filmmakers who appear to conceive of cinema as a superior form of abattoir. (He co-wrote "True Romance" and "Pulp Fiction.") Eric Stoltz plays a safebreaker who comes to Paris to see an old friend, Eric (Jean-Hugues Anglade). Together with their band of merry men (the merriment is all heroin and liquor), they try to rob a bank and foul it up. From time to time—during the opening credits, or at the start of the raid—the movie kicks into life, with traces of Godard in its hectic insouciance. But this eagerness to find a style has nothing to launch from—no obsessions, no arguments, no strong feelings, just a vague desire to rub our noses in the dirt. Also starring Julie Delpy as a whore with—of course—a heart of gold.—A.L. (8/22-29/94) (Angelika Film Center.)

London—A "faux documentary" about a Londoner returning to the city after a seven-year absence. Narrated by Paul Scofield. Written and directed by Patrick Keiller. (Film Forum; through Oct. 11.)

The Mask—Genial goonery. Jim Carrey stars as a sweet loser who gets an id tune-up when he puts on a super-powered Norse mask and becomes a zoot-suited jolly green giant. Since Carrey looks as if he were made of Play-Doh anyway, the computer animation that allows him to bounce and gyrate appears to spring from his own pliable core. The funniest moment comes when Carrey mimes the effects of the Mask *without* special effects. With Max as Milo the plucky terrier. Directed by Charles Russell.—M.S. (Village East Cinema, 86th Street East Twin, and Criterion Center.)

My Fair Lady—The 1964 adaptation of Lerner and Loewe's musical, in a completely restored version. With Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison. Cecil Beaton designed the costumes and sets, and George Cukor directed. (Beekman.)

Nanni x 7—A retrospective program of seven films by Nanni Moretti, from "Io Sono un Autarchico" (1976) to "La Cosa" (1990). In Italian. (Little Theatre.)

Natural Born Killers—"Bonnie and Clyde" in a blender. Oliver Stone uses fractured, blindingly fast editing to depict the warped consciousness of Mickey (Woody Harrelson) and Mallory (Juliette Lewis), a pair of young sociopaths in love. They're familiar types, and Stone's "ideas" about American violence turn out to be the same glib received notions that we've seen in countless other outlaw-couple movies. The oddest thing about this would-be satire is that, for all the gore and hysteria,

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THEATRE ADDRESSES

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EAST SIDE

Angelika Film Center, 18 W. Houston St. (995-2000).
Little Theatre, Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171).
Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th (477-6600).
Village Theatre VII, 3rd Ave. at 11th (982-0400).
Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th (924-3363).
Village East Cinemas, 2nd Ave. at 12th (529-6799).
19th Street East 6, B'way at 19th (260-8000).
Murray Hill Cinemas, 160 E. 34th (689-6548).
34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th (532-5544).
34th St. East, 241 E. 34th (683-0255).
Eastside Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 55th (755-3020).
Sutton I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 57th (759-1411).
Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th (759-2262).
Plaza, 42 E. 58th (355-3320).
Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th (935-6420).
59th Street East Cinema, 239 E. 59th (759-4630).
Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th (355-1663).
Cinema I, Cinema II, and Cinema 3rd Avenue, 3rd Ave. at 60th (753-6022).
First & 62nd Cinemas, 400 E. 62nd (752-4600).
Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th (832-1670).
Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th (737-2622).
New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th (744-7339).
68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th (734-0302).
Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st (879-1313).
East 85th Street, 1st Ave. at 85th (249-5100).
Park & 86th Street Cinemas, 125 E. 86th (534-1880).
Orpheum VII, 3rd Ave. at 86th (876-2400).
86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th (249-1144).

WEST SIDE

Film Forum, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110).
Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd (929-8037).
Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th (929-3350).
Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th (255-8800).
Chelsea Cinemas, 260 W. 23rd (691-4744).
23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd (989-0060).
Guild, 33 W. 50th (757-2406).
Worldwide Cinemas, 50th St. between 8th and 9th Aves. (246-1583).
Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th (765-7600).
57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th (581-7360).
Carnegie Hall Cinemas, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th (265-2520).
Angelika 57, 225 W. 57th (586-1900).
Paris, 4 W. 58th (980-5656).
Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th (752-5959).
Columbus Circle, B'way at 61st (247-5070).
62nd & Broadway, 62 W. 62nd (265-7466).
Lincoln Plaza Cinemas, B'way at 63rd (757-2280).
Regency, B'way at 67th (724-3700).
84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th (877-3600).
Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th (222-1200).
Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th (865-8128).

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th (354-0900).
Embassy I, B'way at 46th (302-0494).
Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th (730-7262).
Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way (869-8340).
National Twin, B'way at 44th (869-0950).

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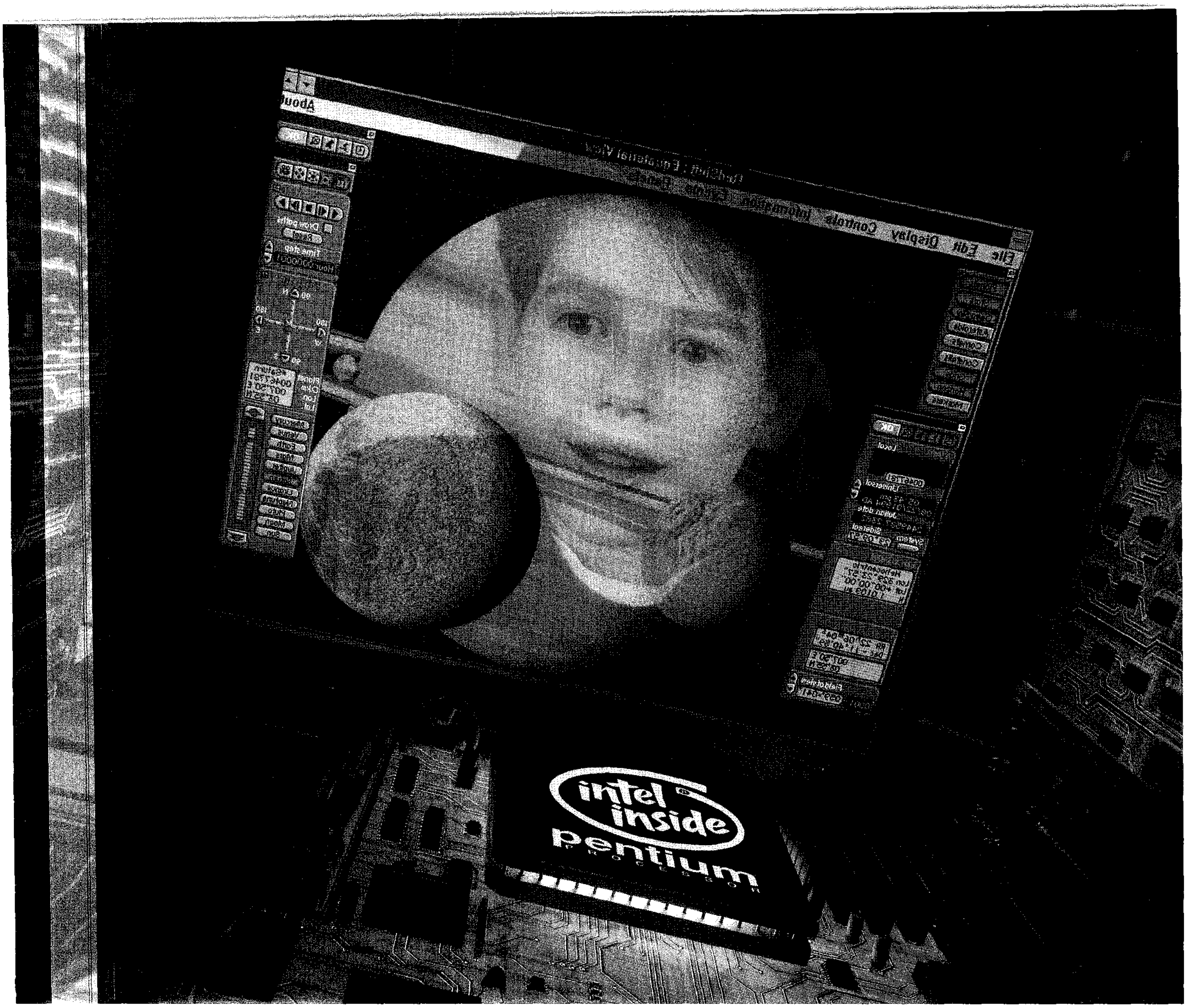

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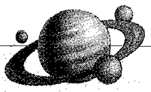

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CHANNEL SURFING

THE English actress Lindsay Duncan, her hair windswept and pale yellow, supplies the only note of spring in the autumnal "The Rector's Wife," the latest offering on PBS's "Masterpiece Theatre." (The three-part series begins on October 9.) When Duncan's Anna Bouverie and her lover make love in a field of buttercups, she is the biggest buttercup of them all. "The Rector's Wife," adapted by Hugh Whitemore from the 1991 English best-seller by Joanna Trollope, is set in a small suburban parish full of bitter, gossip-mongering spinsters and widowers. Although the novelist is descended from Anthony Trollope, and her book shows rustic traces of his Barsetshire series, "The Rector's Wife" is more of a genteel nod to Flaubert, with Anna Bouverie as a less-blinded-by-love Emma Bovary. Anna's infidelity proves to be not a stupid folly that exposes bourgeois humbug but a sensible option—an opportunity to shed her cocoon and wrap herself in womanly fulfillment. But there are also strong dark moments—Trollope is expert on how failure shames men—and scenes of scrimping and skimping worthy of Barbara Pym. For comic relief: a truly awful folk Mass, in which the elderly parishioners' nerves are jangled with each bang of the tambourine.

At first glance, TBS's "The Native Americans" (October 10, 11, and 13) might seem to be Ted Turner's latest wallow in white guilt—penance for not banning the tomahawk chop and chant at Atlanta Braves' games. (T.T. is principal owner of the Braves.) But the series, which was written and directed by Native Americans (the music is by Robbie Robertson, of Mohawk descent), is a richly detailed and impassioned overview of Native American history and culture. Each episode begins with funny, informative commentary by a council of tribal elders. You may begin watching the series out of a sense of duty, only to be held fast by its narrative drive.

Elsewhere in the Turner empire, TNT will be broadcasting "Lakota Woman" (October 16), a film drama about the 1973 occupation of Wounded Knee, and starting October 30 CNN will be filing a series of reports about contemporary Native American life. You have to hand it to Ted Turner—he doesn't do things halfway. —JAMES WOLCOTT

CURRENT FILMS–Cont'd

the film doesn't feel particularly impassioned; it's a frivolous barrage.—T.R. (9/5/94) (Village Theatre VII, Murray Hill Cinemas, Manhattan Twin, Orpheum VII, 23rd St. West Triplex, 84th Street Sixplex, and Criterion Center.)

THE NEW AGE—A wicked straight-faced satire of despair and false hope amongst the hip. The writer-director, Michael Tolkin (author of the book and film "The Player"), is an L.A. Antonioni with a sense of humor. He and his sensor-sharp cast (Judy Davis, Peter Weller, Adam West, Patrick Bauchau, Patricia Heaton) nail a deadly portrait of shallowness and self-absorption—and make it deadly funny. Davis and Weller are unhappy marrieds who seek advice from New Age guru Bauchau and open a chic clothing store called Hipocracy. Tolkin captures all the anxieties about fashion and fulfillment that spread through L.A. smog and infect on contact. Davis is a genius at turning feelings that her character can't get a fix on into tense, scrunched-up expressions.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas and Tower East.)

PRINCESS CARABOO—A historical drama, set in England in 1817, based on an actual incident. An exotic young woman (Phoebe Cates) who speaks an unknown language appears in a village and manages both to charm those she meets and to arouse their suspicions. Stephen Rea co-stars as a newspaperman. Directed by Michael Austin. (Village Theatre VII, 19th Street East 6, Orpheum VII, and Columbus Circle. . . . ¶ Gemini; through Oct. 6.)

QUIZ SHOW—Robert Redford's movie is a speedy, absorbing chronicle of a trivial show-business scandal of the fifties: the rigging of big-money quiz shows. The screenplay, by Paul Attanasio, tries hard to sell some sweeping ideas about the class dynamics of American society, and doesn't quite succeed. The picture's real strength is its witty, vigorous evocation of the fifties media world. It hums along like a well-constructed farce, and its crazy momentum carries it over the bumps of social significance. Ralph Fiennes, John Turturro, and Rob Morrow have the largest roles, but they're outshone by the supporting players: Paul Scofield, Mira Sorvino, Christopher McDonald, Allan Rich, Hank Azaria, Barry Levinson, and—best of all—David Paymer.—T.R. (9/19/94) (Village Theatre VII, Cinema I, 86th Street East Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Guild, and 84th Street Sixplex.)

RED ROCK WEST—A clever thriller about a good-hearted loner (Nicolas Cage) who trips and falls into a murder plot. It makes spooky use of the setting—a small, windblown Western town—and its surprises actually add up: for once, an angular narrative serves to sharpen the characters. Cage's shaggy hang-dog charm and core of intelligence and rectitude keep the audience rooting for the hero after several dumb moves. John Dahl's direction, like the script he wrote with his brother Rick, is sure and economical. With Dennis Hopper, J. T. Walsh, and Lara Flynn Boyle.—M.S. (Lincoln Plaza Cinemas.)

THE RIVER WILD—A family led by plucky supermom Meryl Streep goes on a white-water-rafting vacation out West and gets a hairier trip than it bargained for; the raft is hijacked by a pair of desperate crooks. The audience, however, gets precisely what *it* bargained for: safe, predictable thrills, with a light spray of dysfunctional-family drama. Curtis Hanson's direction is expert, but the screenplay, by Denis O'Neill, is so formulaic that the picture is never more than moderately exciting; you can see around every bend in this river. Imagine Virginia Madsen in Streep's role and you'll understand what this picture really is—a made-for-cable movie in wide-screen disguise. Also with Kevin Bacon, David Strathairn, Joseph Mazzello, and John C. Reilly.—T.R. (34th Street Showplace, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Art Greenwich Twin, Chelsea Cinemas, Ziegfeld, and Regency.)

THE SCOUT—A has-been major-league scout (Albert Brooks) discovers an unpredictable rookie (Brendan Fraser) and takes him all the way to the World Series. With Dianne Wiest. Written by Brooks and Andrew Bergman; based on an article by Roger Angell. Directed by Michael Ritchie. (Murray Hill Cinemas, Gotham Cinema, Orpheum VII, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, 62nd & Broadway, and Criterion Center.)

SECOND BEST—William Hurt, a lonely middle-aged postmaster in a Welsh village, decides to adopt a son (Chris Cleary Miles). With Prunella Scales, Alan Cumming, and John Hurt. Written by David Cook, from his novel. Directed by Chris Menges. (19th Street East 6 and New York Twin.)

THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION—Tim Robbins returns to his best form with his haunted, cunning portrayal of Andy Dufresne, a young banker sentenced to life imprisonment. It's the nineteen-forties, and he is sent to Shawshank, a dark and doomy jail where the inmates protest their innocence and the satanic warden (Bob Gunton) brandishes a Bible. Frank Darabont's movie never grabs at you, preferring to work patiently on your sympathies and nerves while finding time for casual jokes. What at first seems like a plotless tale of companionship—principally between Andy and a fixer named Red (Morgan Freeman)—tightens into excitement. There are moments of hokey togetherness, and way too much voice-over, but the picture stays on track and leaves you, appropriately enough, with a surging sense of release.—A.L. (9/26/94) (Village Theatre VII, Coronet, Chelsea Cinemas, and 84th Street Sixplex.).

SLEEP WITH ME—Eric Stoltz and Meg Tilly are the lovers, but Craig Sheffer, the couple's best friend, loves Tilly, too. The romantic triangle unfolds in six acts, each section by a different author: Duane Dell'Amico, Roger Hedden, Neal Jimenez, Joe Keenan, Michael Steinberg, and Rory Kelly, who also directed. (Village Theatre VII and Carnegie Hall Cinemas.)

TERMINAL VELOCITY—In this dumb-jock extravaganza, a daredevil skydiver (Charlie Sheen) hooks up with a mysterious beauty (Nastassja Kinski) to preserve the stability of the New Russia and thus the Free World. Sheen's "Hot Shots!" and "Major League" facetiousness invades his thriller persona; he shoots himself in the foot every time he opens his mouth. His character's nickname is Ditch, which leaves the radiant Kinski in the awful position of sobbing "Ditch . . . Ditch" at the climax. The skydiving scenes have several cool gimmicks, but pale before the ones in the equally ridiculous "Point Break." David Twohy's script marks the nadir of hardboiled jocularity. Deran Sarafian directed.—M.S. (Village East Cinemas, 19th Street East 6, Murray Hill Cinemas, Cinema II, Orpheum VII, 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy 1.)

TIMECOP—The come-on: Jean-Claude Van Damme's emergence as a superstar. The plot: In 2004, a time-travel enforcement agent (Van Damme) discovers that a senator (Ron Silver) has been looting the past to buy the Presidency. The reality: Van Damme and the movie are stiffs. That the film acknowledges the actor's dullness (the timecop himself quips, "I'm never funny") doesn't make it more palatable. Mia Sara, as his wife, must carry the love story while Van Damme does his usual kick-fisticuffs. The filmmakers lack consistency or cleverness even when it comes to their big point: that changes in the past ripple into the future. They want their movie to skip like a stone. It sinks like one. Peter Hyams directed and photographed; script by Mark Verheiden.—M.S. (34th St. East, First & 62nd Cinemas, Park & 86th Street Cinemas, Waverly, Chelsea Cinemas, Metro Cinema, and National Twin.)

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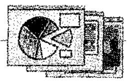

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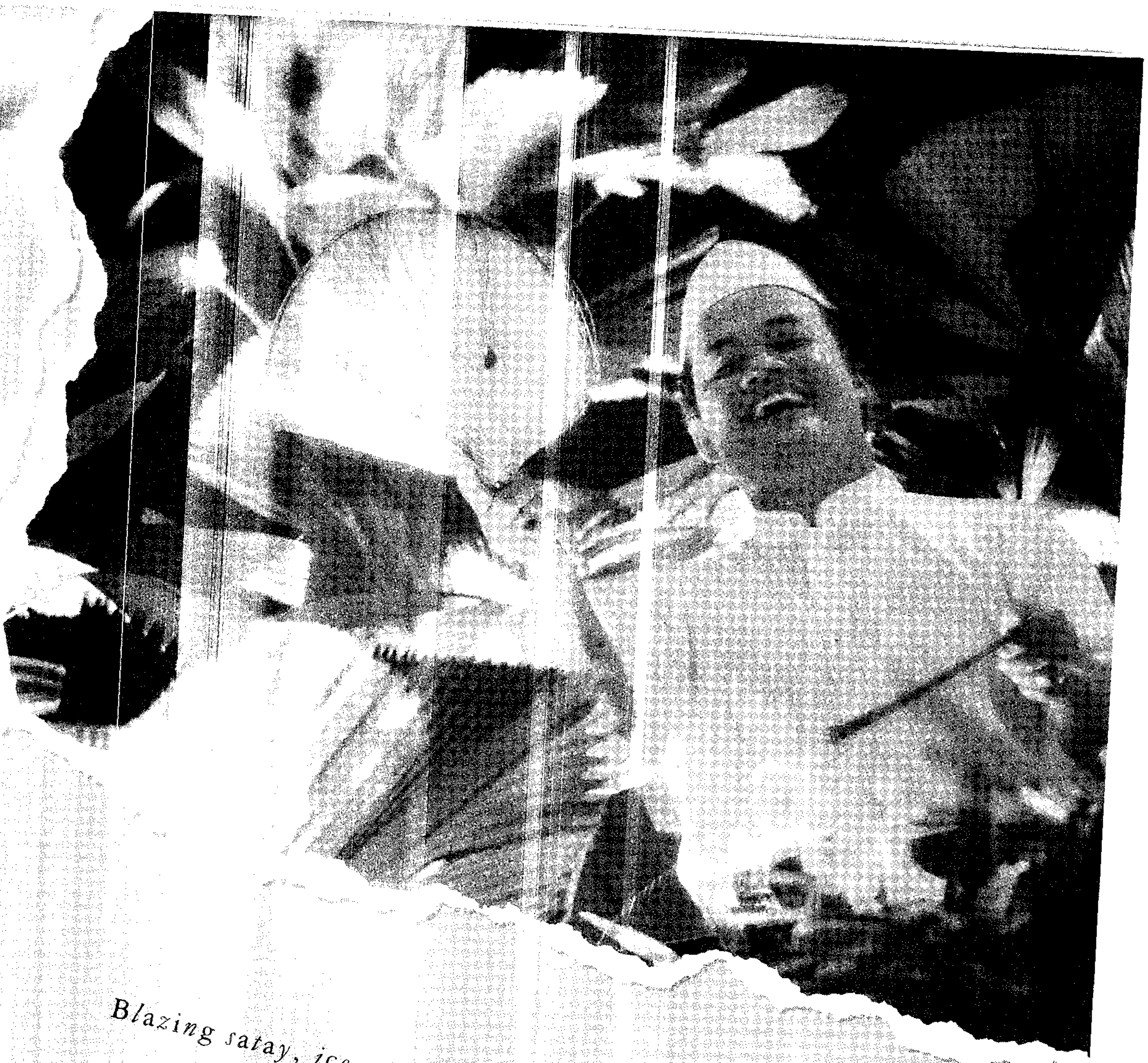

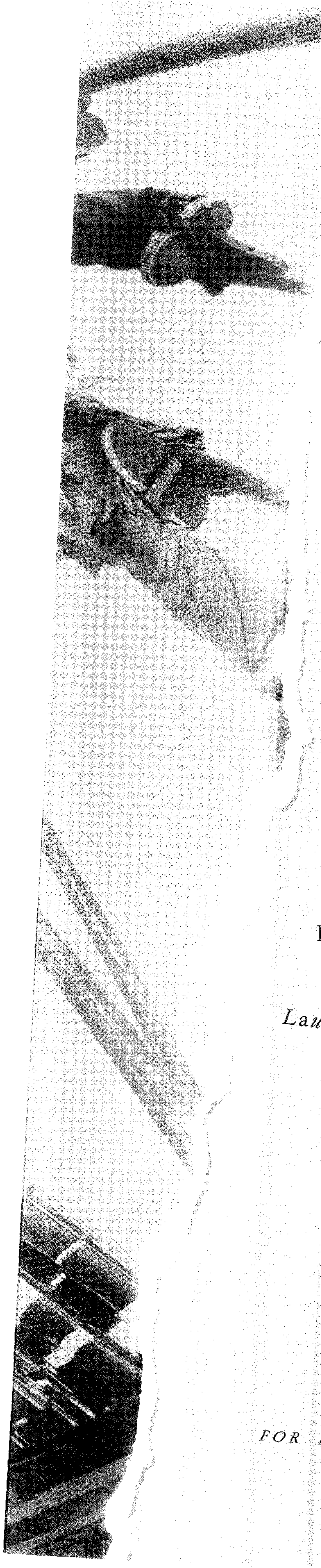

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CURRENT FILMS—Cont'd

True Lies—James Cameron and Arnold Schwarzenegger join forces for their first outing since "Terminator 2," and it's a bumpy ride. Schwarzenegger stumbles into James Bond territory as a suave international spy named Harry Tasker; it's a stiff and rather sad sight. The middle chunk of the film defies belief—not with special effects, unfortunately, but with humdrum misogyny. Harry suspects his wife (Jamie Lee Curtis) of adultery, kidnaps her, and subjects her to a series of humiliations, apparently in an effort to win back her love. Yeah, right. Tom Arnold saves the show as Harry's sidekick.—A.L. (7/25/94) (59th Street East Cinema, Olympia, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Movieland 8th Street Triplex; through Oct. 6.)

What Happened Was . . .—Tom Noonan wrote, directed, and stars in this blow-by-blow saga of an awkward first date. With Karen Sillas. (Angelika Film Center.)

REVIVALS

(The following notes are by Pauline Kael and Michael Sragow. Theatre addresses and phone numbers appear with the film-library listings following these notes.)

The Conformist (1970)—Bernardo Bertolucci wrote and directed this extraordinarily rich adaptation of the Alberto Moravia novel about an upper-class follower of Mussolini. It's set principally in 1938. Bertolucci's view isn't so much a reconstruction of the past as an infusion from it; the film cost only $750,000—Bertolucci brought together the décor and architecture surviving from that modernistic period and gave it all unity. Jean-Louis Trintignant, who conveys the mechanisms of thought through tension, the way Bogart did, is the aristocratic Fascist—an intelligent coward who sacrifices everything he cares about because he wants the safety of normality. Stefania Sandrelli is his deliciously corrupt, empty-headed wife, and Dominique Sanda, with her swollen lips and tiger eyes, is the lesbian he would like to run away with. The film succeeds least with its psychosexual approach to the Fascist protagonist, but if the ideas don't touch the imagination, the film's sensuous texture does. It's a triumph of feeling and of style—lyrical, flowing, velvety style, so operatic that you come away with sequences in your head like arias. In Italian.—P.K. (Film Forum.)

Lacombe, Lucien (1974)—About a boy who has an empty space where feelings beyond the purely instinctual are expected to be. The time is 1944, and the boy—a French peasant—goes to work each day hunting down and torturing people for the Gestapo. The director, Louis Malle, casts as Lucien a teen-age country boy (Pierre Blaise) who can respond to events with his own innocence, apathy, and animal shrewdness. Malle's gamble is that the cameras will discover what the artist's imagination can't, and, steadily, startlingly, the gamble pays off. Without ever mentioning the subject of innocence and guilt, this extraordinary film, in its calm, dispassionate way, addresses it on a very deep level. In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; Oct. 11.)

A Man Escaped (1956)—In this country, escape is a theme for action movies, but the French director Robert Bresson is famous for his uncompromising methods, and having been a prisoner of the Nazis himself, he is not disposed to treat his material—André Devigny's account of his escape from the Montluc fortress prison—lightly. Bresson's hero's ascetic, single-minded dedication to escape is almost mystic, and the fortress constitutes a world as impersonal and as isolated as Kafka's. The movie was shot at Montluc with fanatic authenticity; the photography, by Léonce-Henry Burel, is austerely beautiful. François Leterrier, a Sorbonne philosophy student, is the lead. The music is Mozart's Mass in C Minor. All this makes it sound terribly pretentious, yet sometimes even the worst ideas can be made to work. It's a marvellous movie. In French.—P.K. (Symphony Space; Oct. 11.)

The River (1951)—Jean Renoir's first color film, made in India, in English, was adapted from Rumer Godden's novel about a British family in India and shot along the banks of the Ganges by Renoir's great cinematographer nephew, Claude Renoir. It's a poetic study of the contact between two civilizations. Renoir does not usurp the position of an insider; he sees India with Western eyes—eyes so sensitive and highly trained that his vision of India is a mythic poem set in the midst of the Indian river of life. This river encompasses death (the Goddess Kali episode, the holy cobra that kills the child) in a way that American audiences tend to find disturbing. Rumer Godden's themes and story line are part of the texture, interwoven with the ritual feasts, the festivals, the rhythms of native music, and some people, accustomed to films edited for dramatic crescendo, dislike the serene flow—so much is going on that they feel nothing happens. There are static patches of dialogue, and some of the casting is questionable, but the theme (outsiders in a culture) meshes perfectly with the director's own position as a moviemaker in India, and visually the film is serenely yet passionately beautiful.—P.K. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 9-10.)

Swamp Water (1941)—When it was released, the critic Otis Ferguson wrote that Jean Renoir's first Hollywood-produced picture was "so bad it's terrific." It's filled with stereotypes and emotional bilge about the underlying tensions of rural life near Georgia's Okefenokee swamp. The movie's strength lies in the eeriness of its location shooting (by Peverell Marley and Lucien Ballard), not in the turgid plot about a naïve trapper (Dana Andrews) hooking up with a convicted killer (Walter Brennan) hiding in the swampland. The cast also includes Walter Huston, Ward Bond, John Carradine, and Anne Baxter. Dudley Nichols wrote the script, from a story by Vereen Bell. Four years later, Renoir showed how much he'd learned about American moviemaking and folkways in his vastly superior "The Southerner."—M.S. (Film Forum 2; Oct. 9-10.)

2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)—Stanley Kubrick's slow, precise yet dreamy sci-fi epic. The ponderous, blurry appeal of the picture may be in its mystical vision of a graceful world of space, controlled by superior godlike minds, where the hero (Keir Dullea) is reborn as an angelic baby. It says that man is just a tiny nothing on the stairway to Paradise; something better (i.e., nonhuman) is coming, and it's all out of your hands anyway. Kubrick's story line—which accounts for evolution by an extraterrestrial intelligence—is probably the most gloriously redundant plot of all time. The sulky, peevish voice of Hal, the computer—the only amusing character, he suggests a rejected homosexual lover—was supplied by Douglas Rain; the soft-spoken cast includes Gary Lockwood, Margaret Tyzack, and Leonard Rossiter. The script is by Kubrick and Arthur C. Clarke.—P.K. (Walter Reade Theatre; starting Oct. 10.)

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

New York Film Festival—The annual festival of international films. At **Alice Tully Hall:** Oct. 5 at 6: "Red" (Krzysztof Kieślowski, France). . . . ¶ Oct. 5 at 9 and Oct. 8 at 6: "The Red Lotus Society" (Stan Lai; Taiwan). . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 6: "The Troubles We've Seen" (Marcel Ophuls; France). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 6 and Oct. 8 at 3: "Ladybird, Ladybird" (Ken Loach; Great Britain). . . . ¶ Oct. 7 at 9 and Oct. 8 at noon: "The Wild Reeds" (André Téchiné; France). . . . ¶ Oct. 8 at 9 and midnight: "Postcards from America" (Steve McLean; United States) and "The Salesman and Other Adventures" (Hannah Weyer; United States). . . . **Walter Reade Theatre:** Oct. 9 at 11 A.M.: "Sátántangó" (Béla Tarr; Hungary, Germany, and Switzerland). A seven-hour film, with an intermission. . . .

AVERY FISHER HALL: Oct. 9 at 8: "Hoop Dreams" (Steve James, Frederick Marx, and Peter Gilbert; United States). (For tickets, call 875-5050.)

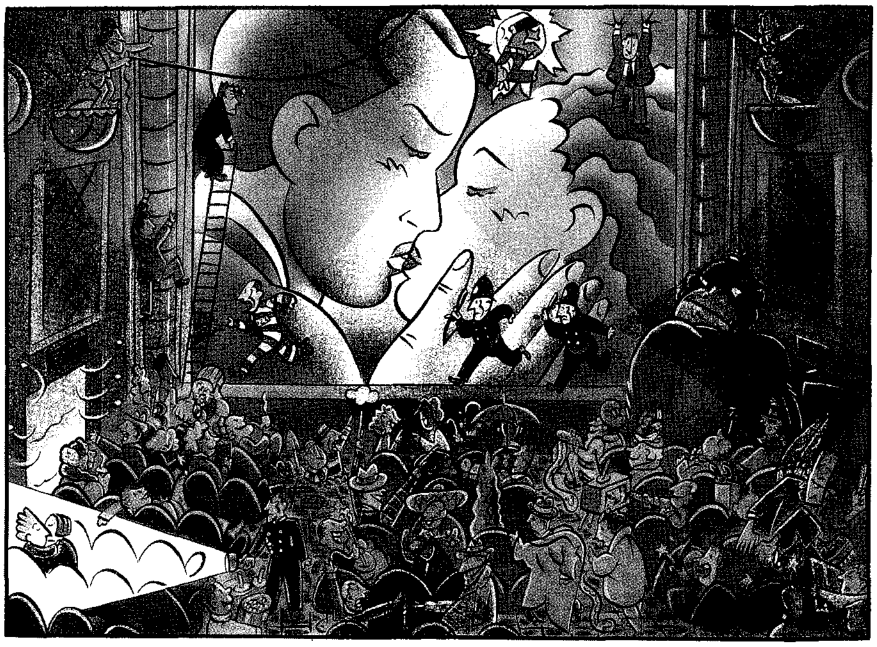
FILM FORUM 2, 209 W. Houston St. (727-8110)—A program of films by Jean Renoir. Through Oct. 6: "The Woman on the Beach" (1947) and "The Diary of a Chambermaid" (1945). . . . Oct. 7-8: "French Cancan" (1954, in French) and "Eléna et les Hommes" (1956, in French). . . . Oct. 9-10: "The River" (†) and "Swamp Water" (†). . . . Oct. 11: "La Fille de l'Eau" (1924, silent) and "Tire au Flanc" (1927, silent).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9480)—Oct. 7 at 6 and 8, Oct. 8-9 at 2 and 5, and Oct. 10 at noon, 2:30, and 5: "Baseball" (1994), Ken Burns's nine-part documentary, divided into nine "innings" for easy showing. . . . ¶ A program of Mexican films from 1933 to 1959. Oct. 6 at 2:30 and Oct. 11 at 6: "Wildflower" (1943, Emilio Fernández), with Dolores del Rio and Pedro Armendáriz. . . . Oct. 6 at 6: "Republic of Sin" (1959, Luis Buñuel), with Maria Félix and Gérard Philipe. . . . Oct. 7 at 2 and Oct. 9 at 3: "Godfather Mendoza" (1933, Fernando de Fuentes) and "Let's Go with Pancho Villa!" (1935, de Fuentes). . . . Oct. 7 at 6 and Oct. 10 at 2: "A Different Dawn" (1943, Julio Bracho). . . . Oct. 7 at 8 and Oct. 8 at 2: "Pueblerina" (1948, Fernández). . . . Oct. 8 at 5: "Salón Mexico" (1948, Fernández). . . . Oct. 10 at 5 and Oct. 11 at 2:30: "Aventurera" (1949, Alberto Gout). . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 12:30 and Oct. 7 at 3: More than a hundred commercials, winners of the 1993 British Advertising Broadcast Awards. . . . ¶ Oct. 6 at 3 and 6: "Metal and Melancholy" (1993, Heddy Honigman).

WALTER READE THEATRE, Lincoln Center, 165 W. 65th St., plaza level (875-5600)—The Third New York Video Festival. Oct. 5 at 2: "Former East/Former West" (1994, Shelly Silver). . . . Oct. 5 at 4 and Oct. 8 at 9: "Uh-Oh!" (1994, Julie Zando). . . . Oct. 5 at 6: "I Have Graduated" (1992). . . . Oct. 5 at 8:15 and Oct. 8 at 7:15: "The Hair Opera" (1992, Obitani Yuri). . . . Oct. 6 at 2: "X 1/2: The Legacy of Malcolm" (1994). . . . Oct. 6 at 4 and Oct. 7 at 9:30: "The Children Play Russian" (1994, Jean-Luc Godard). . . . Oct. 6 at 6: "In the Land of the Oranges" (1994, Amos Gitai). . . . Oct. 6 at 8:15 and Oct. 8 at 5: "Strange Weather" (1993, Peggy Ahwesh and Margie Strosser). . . . Oct. 7 at 6 and Oct. 8 at 2: "On the Far Side of Twilight" (1994, Kohei Ando). . . . ¶ Oct. 10-11 at 2, 6:15, and 9: "2001: A Space Odyssey" (†).

A DIFFERENT LIGHT BOOKSTORE, 151 W. 19th St. (989-4850)—A Sunday-night series of free films (and popcorn). On Oct. 9 at 7, author Quentin Crisp will introduce his favorite film, "Mata Hari" (1932, George Fitzmaurice), with Greta Garbo, Ramon Novarro, and Lionel Barrymore.

WHITNEY MUSEUM, Madison Ave. at 75th St. (570-0537)—A program of films from India. Oct. 5 at 2:15, Oct. 6 at 1:15, Oct. 7 at noon, Oct. 8 at 11:30, and Oct. 9 at noon: Five different programs of short films and videos. . . . Oct. 5 at noon: "Salaam Bombay!" (1988, Mira Nair; in Hindi). . . . Oct. 5 at 4:30: "Courtesans of Bombay" (1983, Ismail Merchant). . . . Oct. 6 at 3:30: "One Hand Don't Clap" (1988, Kavery Kaul). . . . Oct. 6 at 6:15: "An Unremarkable Life" (1989, Amin Q. Chaudhri). . . . Oct. 7 at 3:30: "In Custody" (1993, Merchant). . . . Oct. 8 at 3:30: "Mississippi Masala" (1992, Nair). . . . Oct. 9 at 4: "West Is West" (1988, David Rathod).



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ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES, 32 Second Ave., at 2nd St. (505-5181)—A series of Czech films. Oct. 5 at 7 and 10: Two different programs of short films. . . . Oct. 6 at 7: "Greasepaint and Gasoline" (1931, Jindrich Honzl). . . . Oct. 6 at 9: "Battalion" (1927, Premysl Prazsky). . . . Oct. 7 at 6: "Visitor from Darkness" (1921, Karel Lamac). . . . Oct. 7 at 8: "The World Belongs to Us" (1937, Martin Fric). . . . Oct. 7 at 10: "Erotikon" (1929, Gustav Machaty).

MUSEUM OF TELEVISION AND RADIO, 25 W. 52nd St. (621-6800)—Through Oct. 23: "My Name Is Barbra" (1965), with Barbra Streisand. (Showings Tuesdays through Sundays at 2.). . . ¶ Through Oct. 9: "Martha Graham: The Dancer Revealed" (1994), a documentary. (Showings Tuesdays through Sundays at 3:30.). . . ¶ Through Nov. 20, episodes of "Star Trek: The Next Generation." (Showing Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 2 and 4, Thursdays at 2, 4, and 6, Fridays at 2, 4, 5:45, and 7:30, and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 and 4.)

QUEENS MUSEUM OF ART, Flushing Meadows Park. (1-718 592-9700)—Oct. 8 at 2: "Louis Armstrong, Birthday, Newport, July 4, 1970."

FLORENCE GOULD HALL, 55 E. 59th St. (355-6160)—Oct. 11 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Dédée d'Anvers" (1949, Yves Allégret; in French), with Simone Signoret and Bernard Blier.

SYMPHONY SPACE, B'way at 95th St. (864-5400)—Oct. 11 at 7: "Lacombe, Lucien" (†). The director, Louis Malle, will be present. . . . ¶ Oct. 11 at 9:15: "A Man Escaped" (†).

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THE PAPER CHASE

STUDENT reading lists for the first year at the Harvard Law School haven't changed much in decades. There's a fat casebook on torts, another on contracts, and maybe, for something a little racy, a property-law page-turner. This year, however, there has been an addition to the usual warhorses: all five hundred and forty 1Ls have been instructed to read "Juice: The O. J. Simpson Tragedy," published by the *Globe*, a supermarket tabloid.

The assignment is part of a course known as "Cyberlaw: A Course in Skills of Mind and Practice," which, despite its chewy title, is really just an introduction to the skills required for legal practice, as opposed to the more doctrinal fare in the rest of the first-year curriculum. According to Charles Nesson, one of the professors teaching the course, students will spend the entire ten weeks of the class studying the Simpson case. "All the students are getting an E-mail account and access to Lexis and other databases, so they can organize their own personal research infobase," Nesson said recently. "Now they're writing memos about legal issues in the case. They've already done one on whether Judge Ito should close the courtroom to cameras."

But why, it seemed reasonable to ask, are they reading a book slapped together by the *National Enquirer's* low-rent cousin? "I didn't assign it as a distinguished work of journalism," Nesson said. "But it is a wonderful introduction to the issue of what's truth and what's proof. In law, the idea is to generate a credible verdict on evidence that has been authenticated. You take a case like the Simpson case, and questions about what really occurred in the past become very difficult."

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ROBERT RISKO

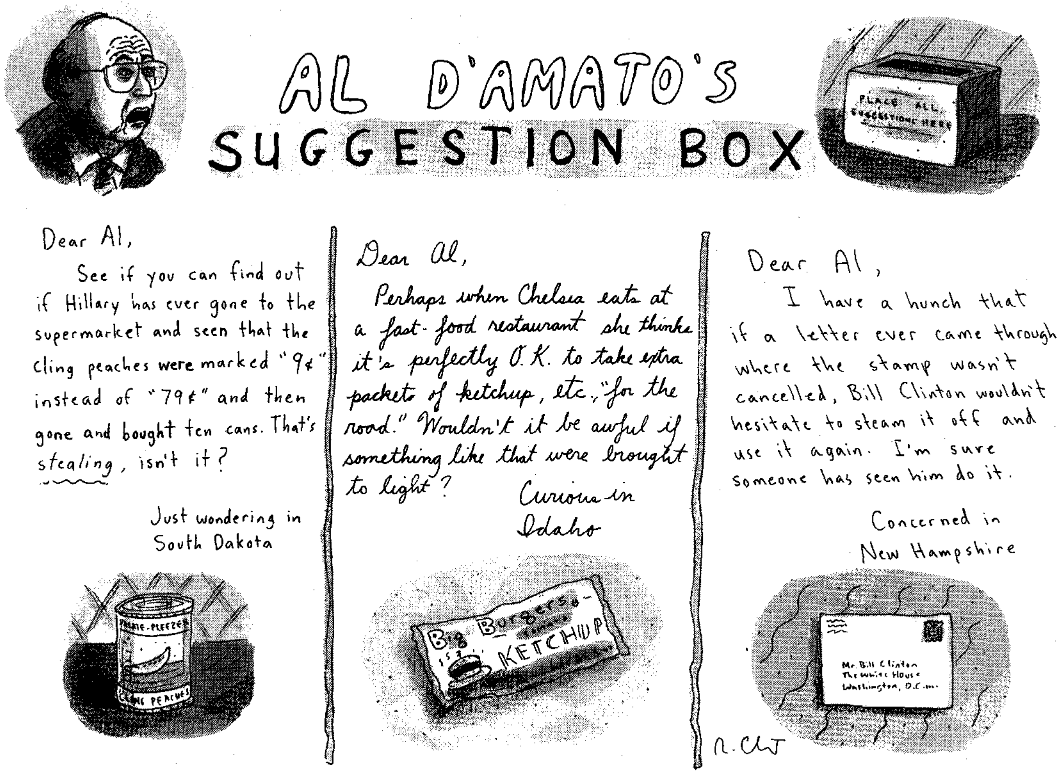
Well, yes. But maybe there's another lesson in O.J.-for-credit. Lawyers give you fancy reasons to do what you want to do anyway, and now "Court TV" is homework. Nesson himself certainly appreciates the appeal of forbidden fruit. "My father was city censor of Boston under Mayor Curley," he said, "and was the man who censored Jane Russell in 'The Outlaw.' So they marketed the picture with a poster that said 'Banned in Boston.' It made a big impression, so I guess this is all my dad's fault."

SETTING DANCE HISTORY TO MUSIC AT LINCOLN CENTER

BEFORE "Live from Lincoln Center" and "Dance in America," before magnetic tape and the camcorder, there was a firmly established tradition of recording dancers in performance. Not all the filming was done by professionals; in fact, most of it was the work of fans—people who smuggled movie cameras into the theatres and set up a lively trade in pirated films and tapes. One way or another, the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, at Lincoln Center, has acquired a lot of this material, which with every passing year grows more precious. The problem with making more of it available to the public isn't merely that legal restrictions apply; in most cases, these can be cleared. The problem is that an overwhelming number of the most valuable acquisitions are on perishable stock and, worse yet, are without sound.

On a bright morning toward the end of summer, Madeleine Nichols, the curator of the Dance Collection, could be found in a West Side recording studio huddling with Ron Honsa, a video producer, over one of the treasures of the collection—Violette Verdy and Edward Villella in Balanchine's "La Source." With the help of a pianist, Honsa was about to do something that had never been done before in the history of the Dance Collection: lay a live musical track under a dancing image. A TV monitor above the studio console showed Verdy, in her lavender costume, and Villella, in his cream-and-rust one, flying soundlessly about the State Theatre stage while numbers on a digital clock changed rapidly above their heads. Asked where she had got the film, all Nichols would say was "From a friend of Violette's." But she added that it had been shot sometime in the early seventies with a Super-8 camera, and that before being transferred to videotape it had been edited for continuity and checked for tempo by Violette Verdy herself. And that Verdy herself would soon be arriving to supervise the recording process.

The "La Source" film is the pilot in what Nichols hopes will be a long-term project to post-synch all the synchable silent footage that has been languishing in the vaults. "We have stuff filmed at


AL D'AMATO'S
SUGGESTION BOX
PLACE ALL SUGGESTIONS HERE
Dear Al,
See if you can find out if Hillary has ever gone to the supermarket and seen that the cling peaches were marked "9¢" instead of "79¢" and then gone and bought ten cans. That's stealing, isn't it?
Just wondering in South Dakota
CLING PEACHES
Dear Al,
Perhaps when Chelsea eats at a fast-food restaurant she thinks it's perfectly O.K. to take extra packets of ketchup, etc., "for the road." Wouldn't it be awful if something like that were brought to light?
Curious in Idaho
Big Burgers KETCHUP
Dear Al,
I have a hunch that if a letter ever came through where the stamp wasn't cancelled, Bill Clinton wouldn't hesitate to steam it off and use it again. I'm sure someone has seen him do it.
Concerned in New Hampshire
Mr. Bill Clinton
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Jacob's Pillow in the sixties, the fifties, the forties," Nichols said. "We have practically all the American Dance Festival seasons at Connecticut College, where much of the most important modern-dance work was done. We have the entire Stravinsky Festival held in 1972 by the New York City Ballet. That was filmed by professionals at our behest and Mr. Balanchine's, only the orchestra wouldn't give permission to record the music. At the time, there were no archival-filming agreements between the company and the musicians' union. It's a very different situation today."

"And the technology is much more advanced," Honsa added. "In 1972, we couldn't have superimposed music on a dance film with any hope of precise synchronization. Today, we can do it, and with CD-quality sound. We've caught up with the artists."

"We chose to begin with 'La Source' for a number of reasons," Nichols said. "First, Violette is exceptionally, famously musical and this was one of her definitive roles, created for her by Balanchine. If we can reattach music to a performance of this calibre, we will really be showing what can be done these days with digital equipment. Then, too, Violette happened to be in New York at a time when we could also get Dianne Chilgren, whom we especially wanted because of her long experience playing piano for Balanchine. But what tipped the whole thing was that the Balanchine Foundation had just received a five-thousand-dollar grant earmarked for preservation purposes. That grant is paying for Dianne's services and Ron's and everything you will see here this morning—except Violette, who is donating her time. I am going to try in every case to get the coöperation of the dancers who were filmed, especially when it's a Balanchine ballet. His choreography is musically so subtle you almost have to have actually danced that performance to know for sure which accent goes where. I would have loved to have Edward Villella here, too, and he would have come, but he's in Edinburgh with his company."

NEXT door, behind a glass wall, Dianne Chilgren was sitting at a grand piano, running through the Delibes music and adjusting her sight line to another monitor. She had come to New York the week before from Seattle, where she is the piano soloist with Pacific Northwest Ballet, and had spent many hours practicing with one eye on a monitor and the other on a score covered with cues that she had pencilled in to alert herself to shifts in tempo and other hazards in the film. (A bad splice jarringly eliminates a split second from the middle of one of Verdy's solos, and at another point Villella disappears for several measures into a blind corner.)

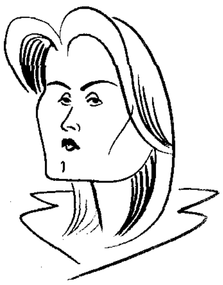
Ron Honsa said that it was time to record. The lights went out in the control room, and suddenly everything was in the hands of Dianne Chilgren and Mark Fisher, the recording engineer. The opening number of "La Source" is a waltz pas de deux. Onscreen, the two dancers began, and at the same instant so did Chilgren. For the duration of the waltz, two minutes and fifteen seconds, the connection between her and the dancers was absolute. Watching with Madeleine Nichols in the control room were Jan Schmidt, from the Dance Collection, and Christine Redpath, a ballet mistress with the New York City Ballet. When the take ended, all three women let out a yell and made thumbs-up gestures toward Chilgren behind her glass wall.

The lights went on, and Chilgren left her bench and joined the excited group in the control room, which now included Violette Verdy, who had come in during the take. The two women have known each other since the days when they were both working for Balanchine, and they embraced warmly. Then everyone looked at Verdy, who was wearing a cotton smock over a print dress and was breathing a little fast. There was no doubt about it: she was as radiantly alive and exhilarated as the Verdy on the screen.

"It's exactly like it was happening for the first time," she said to Chilgren. "It's literally like we are dancing to you playing rather than you playing to us dancing. It's Mr. B. hovering there. He heard the music, he did the dancing, and we're all together no matter what."

POSTMODERN BABE

TV has its own set of Barbie dolls, a blond fantasy toy suitable for each intellectual class. Lowbrows have Heather Locklear, the bouncy, pocket-size sex yuppie on "Melrose Place." Middlebrows have Virginia Madsen, the dimpled vixen of many a made-for-cable film noir. And now highbrows have discovered their own totem—Karen Sillas, an actress whom *Harper's Bazaar* hails as "a robust powerhouse." Unlike Locklear and Madsen, Sillas isn't perky. She refuses to perk. Her implacable face and statuesque figure seem borrowed from Norse myth. Sillas has executed deadpan line-droppings in such Hal Hartley studies of suburban stress as "Trust" and "Simple Men." She has also starred in "What Happened Was . . . ," Tom Noonan's two-character drama, which won the Golden Redford award at the Sundance Film Festival, and in "Risk," one of them downtown movies, in which she plays an artist's model involved with a nutcase. Significantly, her character's name in "Risk" is Maya, the Sanskrit word for illusion. Sillas is Woman, and Woman is Mystery.



Each week, Sillas brings her existential art-house mystique to CBS's "Under Suspicion," a police drama set under the inclement skies of Portland, Oregon. Like Helen Mirren in "Prime Suspect," Sillas plays the only woman of authority (Phil) in a Kafkaesque squad room full of male primates with leers on their lips. Encased in a miniskirt and tightly buttoned jacket, Sillas's Phil keeps her face blank and her body language noncommittal. Her powerful presence muffles the sound around her. The few smiles she offers seem released on parole. A Sillas fan says, "I admire the choices she makes as an actress." That's Sillas's appeal. Her sexual aura, her moody armor, is a postmodern construction. She embodies the decision-making process of her own acting. Sillas makes a choice for each scene, swallows it like a pill, and stiffens as it takes effect. She doesn't become the character, as Mirren does. She becomes the concept of the character—the chalky shell. She objectifies her character in order to show what the objectification of women feels like from the inside (cold). At times, the strain on her cheekbones as she resists the effort to change expression seems tremendous. Her eyes blink like a bleak neon sign. Taking blondness to abstraction, Sillas subverts the notion of being a "babe." She's the anti-babe, a sex symbol who's so symbolic that sex itself seems out of the question. Her cultural significance functions as a chastity belt.

GANGING UP ON THE GANGS

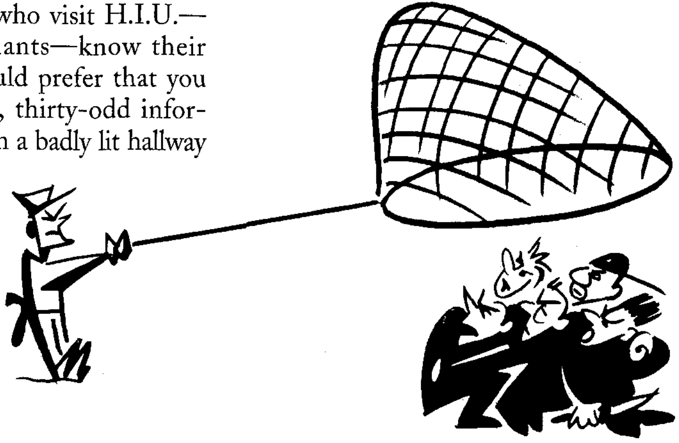
A COUPLE of days before the recent indictment, en masse, of the sixty-four-member New York street gang La Compania, nine members of another gang, the Wild Cowboys, began their ten-count murder trial in State Supreme Court. (They pleaded not guilty.) Leaders of La Compania don't want to end up like the Wild Cowboys, who certainly don't want to end up like the Jheri Curls—that is, convicted of multiple counts of murder. But the odds are they will, because, like the Jheri Curls, both gangs are being prosecuted by the Homicide Investigation Unit, a small team of detectives and prosecutors which specializes in large gang busts and has not lost a single case in its ten-year history. Walter Arsenault, a man who colleagues say knows the nickname of every gang member in New York, is an assistant district attorney who has been the chief of H.I.U. for four years. The agency's success rate has made it a prestigious assignment for young detectives and a respected last stop for their senior counterparts. The only place to go from here, Arsenault says, "is insane."

Arsenault's office is in the criminal courthouse, just a few floors above the Wild Cowboys trial, and behind three sets of locked doors. No sign points to it, but the kind of people who visit H.I.U.—mostly paid informants—know their destination and would prefer that you not. On a busy day, thirty-odd informants will slink down a badly lit hallway to offer secrets to H.I.U. detectives in exchange for small sums of cash. "They don't do it for the public good," Arsenault explained, with a smile. "They're on the payroll."

The other day, Arsenault wore bluejeans and a white oxford shirt, and the only lawyerly thing about him was a pair of big round glasses. His uniform is a metaphor for the unit. Usually, in murder cases, police do the investigating and then hand off their findings to the D.A. Arsenault's office performs both functions, and by the time he gets to the courtroom he knows the defendants personally. He rattles off their names—Chicken, Foodhead, Pacqualito, Popcorn, Dominican David—as if listing his co-workers.

The atmosphere inside H.I.U. is extravigilant, and the entrance of an informant creates a hushed bustle. Most informants are led to small interview rooms, but some are allowed into Arsenault's office, and those, if they are used to rigid, humorless interrogations from police officers, are most certainly surprised. The walls are covered with family portraits, posters of Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff, and navy-blue law-enforcement caps. The office would resemble a dorm room during final exams were it not for all the crime-scene photographs—bloody cadavers tossed about as casually as dirty socks. The tumult of artifacts suggests no clear division between Arsenault's work and his life: next to a child's finger painting is a picture of the aftermath of a rooftop execution.

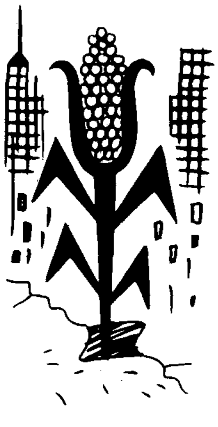
Pointing to a photograph of a charred corpse, Arsenault said, "That's Big Jim Brown. He was burned to death in his cell in Kingston the night before his extradition." An uneasy chuckle. "They said he was smoking in bed." The story of Big Jim is meant as a parable: in the process of investigating gangs, there is no dearth of bodies or evidence, only of leads. "When a gang kills, it's to send a message. Everyone in that neighborhood knows who did it and why." In most cases,



the killer is not the only one responsible. "The higher-ups never do the killing or sell the drugs. They call the lower-downs Dixie Cups, because they're so disposable." Instead of going after the individual killer, H.I.U., coöperating with conventional police units, investigates for months—paying informants, plea-bargaining with Dixie Cups for information, videotaping a gang's every sale—and then casts a wide net.

Of course, members of H.I.U. become targets of those in the business of retribution, but they don't talk about that much. They're more likely to complain playfully that because of the long hours "you don't get new glasses, you don't get your teeth fixed." When the question of revenge does come up, though, a roomful of detectives quiets down. "Why don't you just write 'It's a hazardous job'?" someone suggests.

SEEN AROUND TOWN



When you consider how much happens on an ordinary piece of sidewalk in New York City—especially one along, say, Sixth Avenue in the Village, where, to avoid bumping into one another, people travel private and curving paths that probably overlap trails the Indians worked into the forest floor, it is interesting to note that something a person can do without being seen is plant corn. There are two stalks of corn on Sixth Avenue north of Washington Place, outside the parish house of St. Joseph's Church, and there is a stalk at the northeast corner of West Twelfth Street and Greenwich Street, outside an apartment building. No one knows how they got there. The stalks on Sixth Avenue were planted on a sour little square of land, enclosed by cobblestones, at the base of a cherry tree, and the one on West Twelfth Street was planted beneath a sycamore. None of the stalks have flourished or brought forth any ears. The corn on West Twelfth Street is perhaps three feet tall. Its leaves splay toward opposite points of the compass in a kind of herringbone pattern, and the stalk leans toward the street. Beside it are sedges and ivy and lamb's-quarters pigweed—a plant that is made into salads in the South. The leaves of the stalks on Sixth Avenue are tattered, and the stalks are surrounded by cigarette butts and pieces of broken glass. Passing traffic stirs the leaves.

If you walk around in the vicinity of the corn asking people whether they know how it got there, some of them will look at the corn and say "That's corn?" or "I never knew it was there." Some people will simply stare at the corn. It will be you and the other person having the uncommon urban experience of contemplating corn, and then the two of you will run out of things to say to each other, and perhaps the other person will walk away. In the manner of someone who lives in a town on a prairie and is moved to express a certain kind of longing by inventing the skyline of a city from the tall, spare form of a grain silo, you can expand the stalk into a long, waving green field of corn. Or you can think of the corn as an aspirant, drawn to the city by the shiny lure of excitement and pleasure, who thrived briefly, perhaps, but ended up defeated, a spinster in a one-bedroom, with birds for company.

•

Donna Karan has described her collection line and her lower-priced diffusion line—DKNY—as, respectively, "the limousine" and "the street." Another inspiration the designer might have considered, which goes one step further, is "the trash." It seems, however, that the Department of Sanitation of New York City has beaten Karan to the punch. Garbage collectors all over town have recently been spotted wearing very smart orange-and-green T-shirts emblazoned with the letters "DSNY," the department's initials. Made exclusively for Sanitation Department employees and available only at certain department garages (for six dollars—and add fifty cents for extra-extra large), DSNY T-shirts are a permissible substitute for the department's standard-issue collared work shirts. Like Ms. Karan's ubiquitous New York women on the go, DSNY wearers can be seen uptown, downtown, and everywhere in between, not to mention the outer boroughs.

WHEN LOWBROW MEETS HIGHBROW

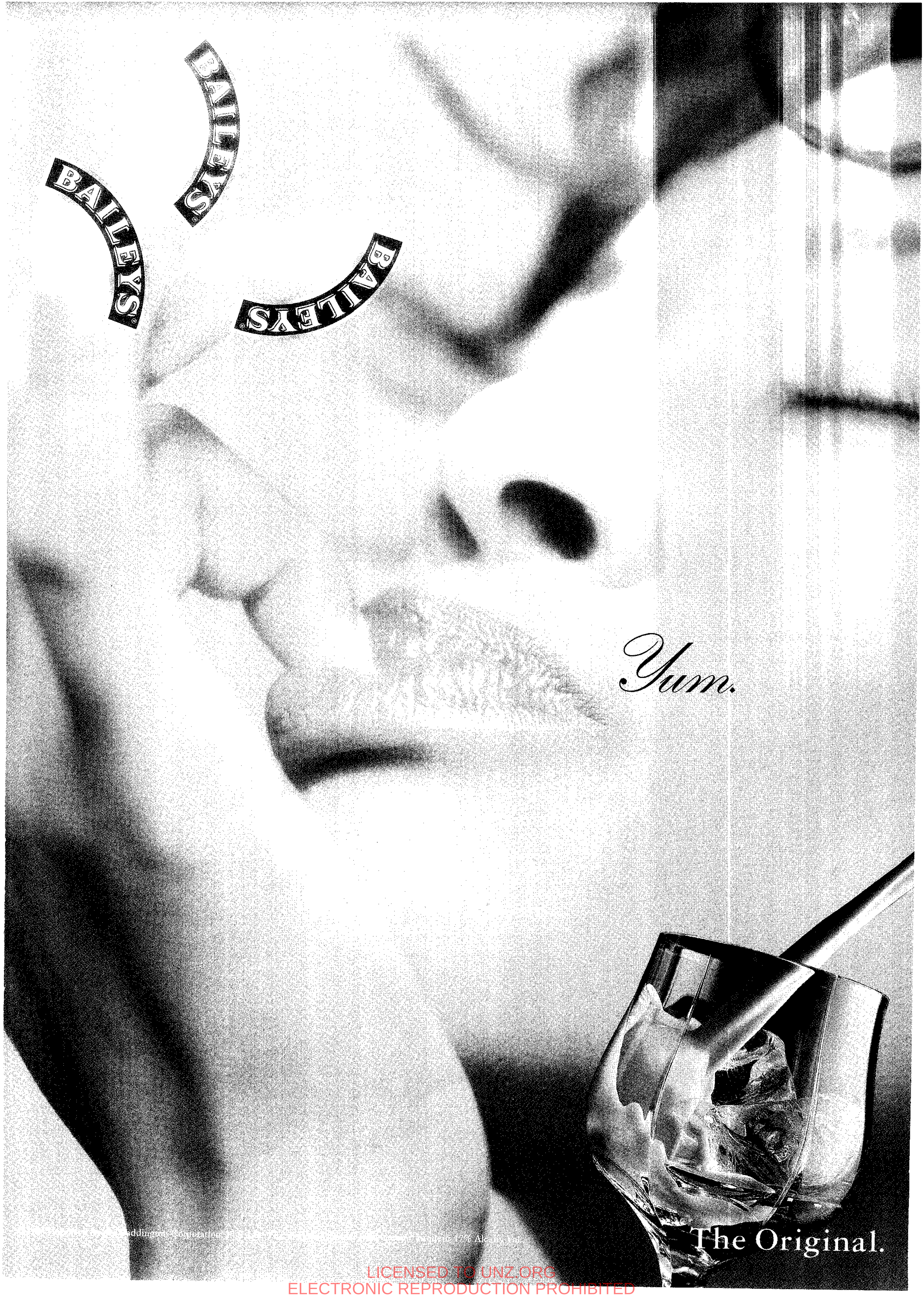
A copy of *The Modern Review,* a bimonthly, was spread open alongside some wineglasses and silverware on a table in London's media-haunted Groucho Club, and Toby Young, the periodical's editor, was looking at it in darkling apprehension. The magazine was open to a photograph of a young man and a young woman, both with wet hair, illustrating an article on a so-called Generation E—users of the drug Ecstasy. The woman was now threatening a lawsuit. The situation was particularly disturbing, gloomed Young, because of the timing: this month, *The Modern Review* is being launched in the United States.

Young, who has a cordial, low-key manner that suggests a certain stubbornness, and who at thirty is growing bald—a rather modish trait among Brit pundits of his generation—brightened noticeably as he contemplated the prospects of his three-year-old magazine. "Our take is that it's smart writers on dumb things," he explained. Or: "It's as if *Entertainment Weekly* were edited by Susan Sontag." Young did a stint teaching political philosophy at Harvard and cultural studies at Cambridge University; within the pages of his magazine the latter discipline is referred to as Cult Studs.

In the issue were breezy articles on the World Cup, on the "Flintstones" movie, and on "Black Lace," a successful series of erotic novels for women. At its best, the Cult Studs crew offers a peppy look at lowlife, and if at its flashy worst the effect is of encountering a professor of semiotics dressed as a biker in a greasy spoon, well, that can be quite interesting, too.

On being asked about the Ecstasy lawsuit a few days after drinks at the Groucho, Young said sunnily, "Oh, that's settled." He added that this had not been *The Modern Review's* first suit; indeed, it had been sued over the very first issue by the late magnate Robert Maxwell. "He discovered that we had used his computer equipment and went ballistic," Young said. How had the crew fared with that? "The case went away—when he went away," Young said, with a delicacy rather rare among Cult Studs. ♦

This week's contributors: Jeffrey Toobin, Arlene Croce, James Wolcott, Warren St. John, Alec Wilkinson, Julia Szabo, Anthony Haden-Guest.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LIFE AND LETTERS

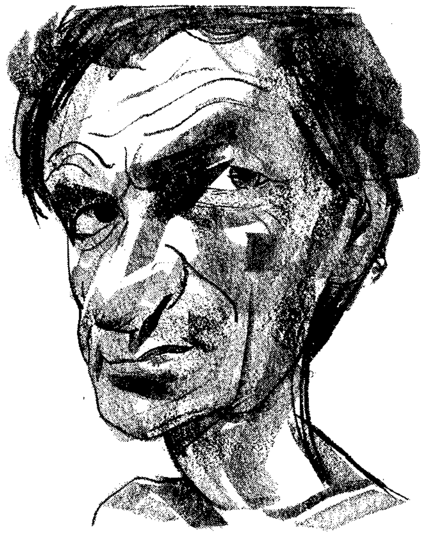
KOSINSKI'S WAR

In Poland, friends and foes of the late Jerzy Kosinski have been switching sides in a bewildering new furor over his most important work, "The Painted Bird."

BY JAMES PARK SLOAN

"JERZY was a fantastic liar," said Agnieszka Osiecka, Poland's leading pop lyricist and a familiar figure in Polish intellectual circles, as she alternately sipped Coke and beer at a sidewalk café in Warsaw. "And so what?"

While she spoke, Osiecka kept putting on and taking off a wide-brimmed red hat of the kind once affected by Frank Lloyd Wright. Years ago, she and Kosinski had sat at tables just like this one. "If you told Jerzy you had a Romanian grandmother, he would come back that he had fifteen cousins all more Romanian than your grandmother"—she returned the hat to her head and gave it a half turn—"and they played in a Gypsy band!"



Kosinski: His real story might have been every bit as compelling, in its way, as "The Painted Bird."

PHILIP BURKE

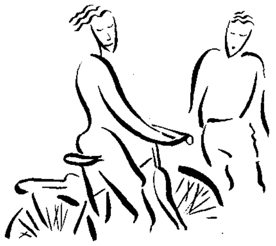
Osiecka was responding to a recent exposé by the Polish journalist Joanna Siedlecka, in which she argued that Jerzy Kosinski, Poland's best-known Holocaust survivor, had profoundly falsified his wartime experiences. According to Siedlecka, Kosinski spent the war years in relatively gentle, if hardly idyllic, circumstances and was never significantly mistreated. She thus contradicts the sanctioned version of his life under the German occupation, which has generally been assumed to be only thinly disguised in his classic first novel, "The Painted Bird," published in this country by Houghton Mifflin in 1965. Siedlecka's revelations have stirred up a tempest in Warsaw café circles, and Polish intellectuals have been busy staking out positions.

In stark, uninflected prose, "The Painted Bird" describes the disasters that befall a six-year-old boy who is separated from his parents and wanders through the primitive Polish-Soviet borderlands during the war. The peasants whom the boy encounters demonstrate an extraordinary predilection for incest, sodomy, and meaningless violence. A miller plucks out the eyeballs of his wife's would-be lover. A gang of toughs pushes the boy, a presumed Gypsy or Jew, below the ice of a frozen pond. A farmer forces him to hang by his hands from a rafter, just out of reach of a vicious dog. In the culminating incident of the book, the boy drops a missal while he's helping serve Mass and is flung by angry parishioners into a pit of manure. Emerging from the pit, he realizes that he has lost the power of speech. The book's title—and governing metaphor—derives from a feeble-minded character named Lekh, who amuses himself by capturing wild birds, painting their feathers in brilliant colors, and releasing them to be pecked from the sky by their own kind.

"Written with deep sincerity and sensitivity, this poignant account transcends confession," Elie Wiesel wrote in the *Times Book Review*. At the time of Kosinski's suicide, in 1991, Wiesel said, "I thought it was fiction, and when he told me it was autobiography I tore up my review and wrote one a thousand times better."

Wiesel's review sanctified the work as

Slow down!



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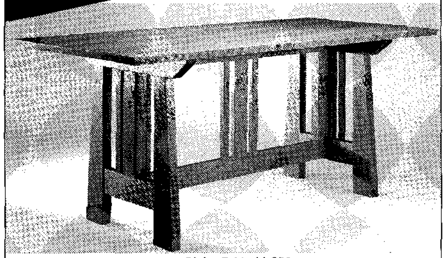

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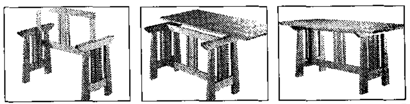

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a valid testament of the Holocaust, more horrible, more revealing—in a sense, *truer*—than the literature that came out of the camps. Other writers and critics agreed. Harry Overstreet wrote that "The Painted Bird" would "stand by the side of Anne Frank's unforgettable 'Diary' " as "a powerfully poignant human document," while Peter Prescott, also comparing it to Anne Frank's "Diary," called the book "a testament not only to the atrocities of the war, but to the failings of human nature." The novelist James Leo Herlihy saluted it as "brilliant testimony to mankind's survival power."

"Account," "confession," "testament," "document," "testimony": these were the key words in the book's critical reception. What made "The Painted Bird" such an important book was its overpowering authenticity. Perhaps it wasn't exactly a diary—six-year-olds don't keep diaries—but it was the next best thing. And in one respect it was better: Kosinski was Anne Frank as a survivor, walking among us.

"The Painted Bird" was translated into almost every major language and many obscure ones. It was a best-seller in Germany and won the Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger in France. It became the cornerstone of reading lists in university courses on the Holocaust, where it was often treated as a historical document, and, as a result, it has been for a generation the source of what many people "know" about Poland under the German occupation. At the height of Kosinski's reputation, there were those who said that somewhere down the road Kosinski was a likely candidate for the Nobel Prize.

Kosinski himself, who emigrated to the United States in 1957, quickly crossed over into popular culture. Beaky, wiry, and intense, he became a writer whose mystique and experiences often seemed more important than his books. On TV, he was a knockout; appearing on the Johnny Carson show, he brought a suggestion of high culture along with his stiletto wit and Polish accent. Always lurking beneath the surface of his public persona was the sense that he was a man who had been through unimaginable horrors, who had been to Hell and had returned to tell about it.

The literary establishment, too, embraced Kosinski, electing him to two terms as president of the American Center of PEN, the writers' organization. The movie made from his third novel, "Being There," was a hit, and when Kosinski appeared at the celebratory parties he seemed as much a star as Peter Sellers or Shirley MacLaine. His friend Warren Beatty cast him as Zinoviev in "Reds," and the writer won praise for his screen presence. Kosinski's magnetism was undeniable. He held court at Elaine's and at the dinner table of the Oscar de la Rentas. He played polo with the Dominican playboy Porfirio Rubirosa and discussed the state of the world with Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger. His celebrated nightly forays to Plato's Retreat and S & M clubs by the New York piers helped make those establishments fashionable.

When a 1982 article by Geoffrey Stokes and Eliot Fremont-Smith in the *Village Voice* accused Kosinski of relying upon excessive editorial assistance in the production of his novels and giving discrepant versions of his departure from Poland, it struck the literary world like a small earthquake. The *Times* came to Kosinski's defense, and the resulting controversy broke out of the literary ghetto to become a national news story. Now, in Poland, a second quake has struck.

To say that Kosinski never claimed every incident of "The Painted Bird" to be the literal truth is a bit like saying that Jesus never claimed to be the Son of God: it may be accurate in some narrow, legalistic sense, but such an edifice came to be constructed upon the assumption that the legalistic niceties were a moot point. Kosinski's occasional hedging often took the tortuous shape of explaining that the book described a set of experiences lived in one language and "unfrozen" by its expression in another. This explanation was preserved in his otherwise baffling 1965 commentary "Notes of the Author," appended to the book's German edition.

Certainly Wiesel and the other reviewers were not alone in their belief that the book was essentially autobiographical. Friends who remember Kosinski from his first years in the United States recall his telling the stories contained in "The Painted Bird" as the literal truth of his wartime experi-

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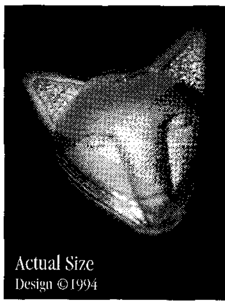

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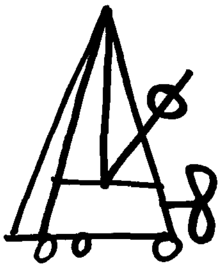
ence. In the final decade of his life, in articles published in 1981 and 1985, Kosinski reiterated the basic elements of his wartime story: that he was sent away by his parents, in the care of a man who was supposed to place him with a family but instead abandoned the six-year-old in a village in the Pripet Marshes of Polesie and kept much of the family savings.

According to Joanna Siedlecka's "Czarny Ptasior" (the book's title, a play on that of Kosinski's novel, translates as "the ugly black bird"), Kosinski's wrenching accounts of his wartime experiences were fabricated from whole cloth. On the basis of conversations with inhabitants of the Polish town of Sandomierz and the nearby village of Dabrowa Rzeczycka, both some distance from the Pripet Marshes, Siedlecka contends that Kosinski spent the war with his family—his mother, father, and, later, an adopted brother—and that they lived in relative security and comfort.

The Kosinskis survived, she suggests, in part because Jerzy Kosinski's father, whose original name was Moses Lewinkopf, saw bad times coming and acquired false papers in the common Gentile name of Kosinski; in part because they had money (acquired in the textile and leather trades) and were able to pay for protection with cash and jewelry; and in part because a network of Polish Catholics, at great risk to themselves, helped hide them.



Siedlecka portrays the elder Kosinski not just as a wily survivor but as a man without scruples. She maintains that he may have collaborated with the Germans during the war and very likely did collaborate with the N.K.V.D., after the liberation of Dabrowa by the Red Army, in sending to Siberia for minor infractions, such as hoarding, some of the very peasants who saved his family. Her real scorn, however, is reserved for the son, who turned his back on the family's saviors and vilified them, along with the entire Polish nation, in the eyes of the world. Indeed, the heart of Siedlecka's revelations is her depiction of the young Jerzy Kosinski spending the war years eating sausages and drinking cocoa—goods unavailable to the neighbors' children—in the safety of his house and yard, and hanging standoffishly, if sadly, on the fence to watch other children play.

When I arrived in Poland not long ago to conduct research for a biography of Kosinski, I found I had landed in the middle of a full-fledged literary furor. The *Gazeta Wyborcza*, one of the leading Warsaw newspapers, had a full-page article lambasting "Czarny Ptasior," and opinion among Warsaw intellectuals was running heavily against Siedlecka. I sought an explanation from Ryszard Matuszewski, a leading Polish critic, now eighty, who, with his thick white hair and rumpled trousers, looks a little like Robert Frost. "Siedlecka writes, as we say here, 'from the kitchen,'" he said as we sat in his austere apartment. "She did up Witold Gombrowicz by interviewing the household help, and it was really a very amusing book—and she did a job on Witkacy, too," he said, referring to two eminences of modern Polish literature. But doing up Kosinski was different. "Don't mistake me," he said. "It was always my opinion that 'The Painted Bird' was pure fantasy. I never much cared for it. But Siedlecka couldn't find the key."

A secondary scandal, on a much smaller scale, erupted recently when two men who had reason to be indebted to Kosinski—a museum director with whom he had worked and a priest who had been given an award, named in memory of Kosinski, for encouraging interfaith dialogue—participated in a literary evening in Siedlecka's honor. Tad Krauze, a professor of sociology and Kosinski's closest friend during the period just before he emigrated to the United States, told me that Kosinski betrayed "a great ideal." Describing him as a man recklessly in pursuit of literary fame and fortune, Krauze recalled Plato's warning to his fellow-Athenians to abjure art forms that may do harm by falsifying reality.

Why would people with personal ties to Kosinski turn on him? And why were so many intellectuals who had never cared for Kosinski now staunchly defending him?

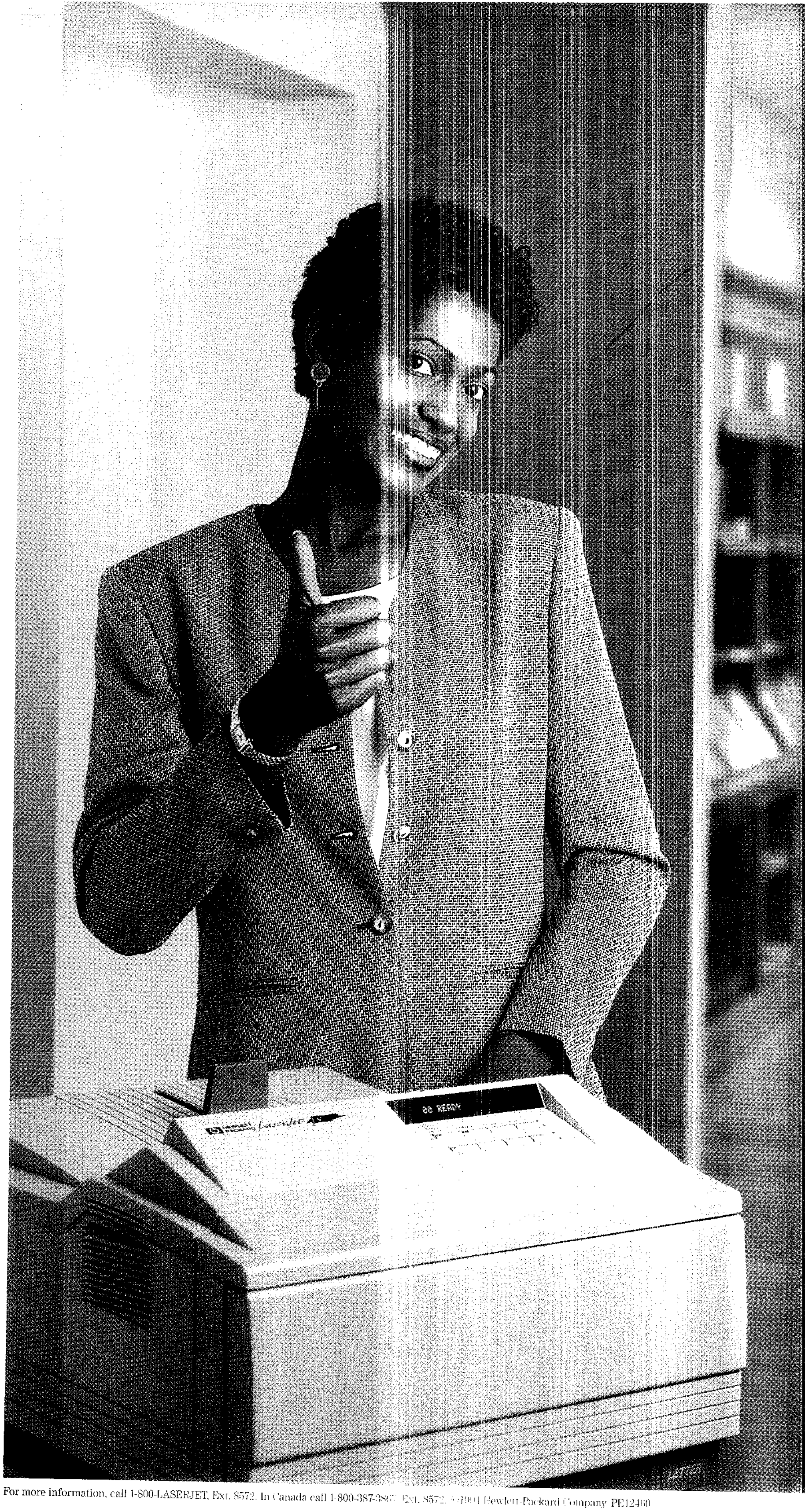
The answers to both these questions are more political than literary. Internationalist and anti-Marxist intellectuals tended to be pro-Kosinski—or, at least, anti-Siedlecka—whereas Polish nationalists and Poles with roots in the Marxist past, whether as former apparatchiks or as believers in the "great ideal," tended to side with Siedlecka. No matter which side you talked to, though, the problem had to do with the boundaries between fact and fiction. Kosinski wrote novels that dared you to believe they were true and dared you not to. But nowhere was the boundary between fact and fiction more problematic than in "The Painted Bird." To deny its truth, so it seemed, was to refuse to acknowledge the horror of the German occupation.

The first printing of the book contained an epilogue that appeared to connect the boy in the story to the author: the boy grows up to find that living in the Communist regime of postwar Eastern Europe is every bit as tough as being on the lam from Nazis and degenerate peasants. Still a "painted bird," marked for persecution by the undifferentiated flock, he flies across the ocean and becomes, presumably, the writer of the book.

It is classic Kosinski—the kind of anarchically individualistic statement that made him such a disturbing and interesting man. The Holocaust is described not as an attack on a group but as something even more terrifying: an attack on the integrity of the self. As such, it could reasonably be linked with the totalitarianism of the Communist regime.

In a 1965 review entitled "The Butcher's Helpers," Andrew Field not only treated the novel as an indictment of Polish anti-Semitism and complicity in the Holocaust but went on to say, "Mr. Kosinski found postwar Communism to be but a logical extension of much that he lived through during the war." Kosinski backpedalled furiously, disavowing the epilogue as a misappropriated letter to his editor and writing a letter to the editor of the *Herald Tribune*—where Field's widely syndicated review appeared—denying that "The Painted Bird" referred to any specific nation or ethnic group. The damage, however, had been done: Kosinski was cast as a writer who had libelled the Polish nation.

The Polish response to the book and its reception had the effect of bundling nationalists, Communists, and anti-



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"Honey, am I home?"

• •

Semites—none of them in short supply in the Poland of 1965—into an anti-Kosinski coalition. The Communist authorities went blindly on the attack. Journalists were dispatched throughout Poland to track down and expose any discreditable information they could find about Kosinski's wartime experiences—an effort that met with only limited success. Still, between 1966 and 1968 Polish journals came out with a series of scalding critiques of the book and its author. Written in intemperate language and riddled with factual errors, these assaults on a book that had never been available in Polish—and would not be for another twenty years—made the Polish press look ridiculous and hypersensitive. So maladroit were the Polish attacks, in fact, that Kosinski's supporters could cite them as a *defense* when Kosinski came under fire from the *Village Voice.* Such enemies, the argument went, did Kosinski honor.

There the matter stood until Siedlecka began to examine some of those articles from the sixties. She pulled actual names and addresses from one of them—a 1968 article in the Kielce *Slowo Ludu*—and set out to locate persons in the town of Sandomierz who had known the Kosinskis during the war. She quickly hit pay dirt: the Kosinskis had been there. And Siedlecka got the story.

"Czarny Ptasior" reads in places like a tract seeking to vindicate Polish honor in the face of indictments such as Claude Lanzmann's "Shoah." Look, Siedlecka seems to be saying, here's the truth behind one of those tales of Polish anti-Semitism, and it proves that the Poles weren't really so terrible—in fact, Poles saved Jews, yet the Jews turned around and did them harm.

Siedlecka's basic posture was one her critics found all too familiar. To them, her work seemed an extension of the anti-Kosinski campaign conducted by Polish officialdom in the late sixties. Indeed, her project gave off an odor of ideological malice: in her zeal to defend Poland—and condemn Kosinki—she seemed to downplay the presence of Polish anti-Semitism. Although Siedlecka's critics did not rebut her core findings, they took her to be insufficiently skeptical toward much of the evidence she accumulated—especially with respect to her allegations that the elder Kosinski was a collaborator. Finally, the intensity of the debate may owe something to the fragility of the long anti-Marxist evolution known as "the Change"—a passage that is by no means over, and one that has rewarded its progenitors very unevenly. To side against Siedlecka is to affirm one's stance as cosmopolitan, anti-Marxist, and *anti*-anti-Semitic. In this atmosphere, the truth of her claims seems almost unimportant.

ONE of the few Warsaw intellectuals to attempt a genuinely objective view was Tomasz Mirkowicz, whose Polish translation of "The Painted Bird" was published in 1989. I discussed the Siedlecka controversy with him and his wife, Julita (the translator of Kosinski's "Being There"), during dinner at a restaurant in Warsaw's Old Town.

Dressed casually in jeans, the Mirkowiczes combine, in a manner unfamiliar to Americans, Western countercultural style with Eastern European anti-Marxist politics—the mirror image, politically, of America's nineteen-sixties hippies. Their dissident credentials are impeccable. In 1986, Zbigniew Bujak, then the head of the Solidarity underground, was captured in the Mirkowiczes' apartment, where he was tending their cat while they were away in America.

"Siedlecka *almost* wrote a very interesting book," Tomasz Mirkowicz said. "Kosinski once told me honestly that he drew upon a postwar Polish text, 'Polish Children Accuse.' " He was referring to a compilation of accounts by Polish children of their experiences under the German occupation. "The fact that Kosinski was not separated from his parents, the information on places he stayed and the people he was with—all this is very interesting material for historians and literary scholars." What surprised him, he said, was that, so far, no one had gone to the villages to check on the details for themselves. What if Siedlecka had made it all up? "You'll be going to Sandomierz and Dabrowa," he said. "I'll be interested to hear what you discover."

EARLY on the morning of June 8th, after a stopover in Lodz, I took the train for Sandomierz, accompanied by Agnieszka Kmin, a graduate student from Lodz, who was serving as my research assistant. For eight hours, the train crept southeast, and, as it did so, the view through our window moved backward in time, to miniature tractors of types I hadn't seen since my rural boyhood, and, finally, to horse-drawn plows and hay wagons. The villages became smaller and farther apart, the vegetation greener and darker, the forests heavier and deeper. "I'm frightened," Agnieszka said, only half in jest, as we changed trains for the last time. "I've never been this far east before."

Sandomierz is a picturesque medieval town set on a hill above the Vistula, eighty-five miles from the Ukrainian border. It has an old church, some grain-storage cellars dug in the hillside, wall towers, and the remnants of a castle, all of which make it a popular destination for Polish school groups. Its most distinctive feature, perhaps, is a series of ravines through which one walks to outlying areas. Gouged deep into heavy forest and brush, and revealing sculptures of gnarled tree roots, the ravines are the natural landscape of fairy tales—places where the passions and terrors of the human heart may assume the shapes of unimaginable beasts.

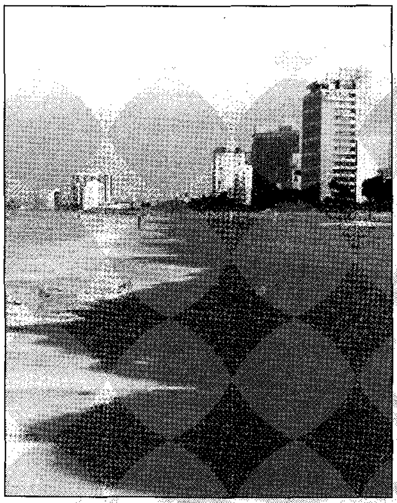
Our contact in Sandomierz was a tour guide named Zenon Pas, a short, hawk-like man in his late forties, who wore tinted sunglasses indoors and out. His movements revealed a relentless impatience and energy, which on this occasion would be put to my service. Before we could begin, however, I had to undergo a ritual of initiation. A second man appeared, identified himself as a local reporter, and asked if I would mind submitting to a brief interview. He had a bulky antique tape recorder, which he could not get to function properly, and I set my microrecorder next to it on Pas's desk. Against these stage props of duelling tape recorders, we interviewed each other, with Kmin translating and Pas interrupting to clarify statements or speed the process along. After ten minutes or so, there came a barrage of questions about my ancestry and origins. Kmin and I exchanged glances. "I think he wants to know if you are Jewish," she said. Feeling complicitous in something sinister, I told him that I was a Scottish Protestant, and the interview was swiftly concluded.

Pas marched us through a tour of the houses in which the Kosinskis had lived while they were in Sandomierz; at one of them, he forced his way in past a sullen teen-ager and compelled the girl's mother to abandon her housework and take us on a guided tour of her cramped rooms, which she did rather sheepishly. Always the tour guide, Pas pointed out landmarks: a house once occupied by the wealthy Salamonowiczes, a building in which the Gestapo had conducted interrogations, a square that had been sealed off as the Jewish ghetto. Then he marched us down a ravine to a cottage where, he said, his own grandmother, quite courageously, had kept the Kosinskis for two summers.

From the cottage, he led us back up another ravine to the Sandomierz State Archive, to examine verifying documents, some of them bearing his grandmother's signature. Pas himself placed the yellowed papers—some referring to the Kosinskis and some using the family's prewar name of Lewinkopf—in my hands. Back outside the archive, which had once been the synagogue (there is, of course, no Jewish community in contemporary Sandomierz), Pas pointed out a bathhouse outside of which his father used to lie in ambush to "touch the Jewish women," and so compel them to return for repurification. "We are not Jew-haters," he said. "He did it because back then they didn't have TV."

By this time, I had learned that Pas's grandmother, Marianna Pasiowa, was the woman Kosinski had transformed into Marta, the superstitious peasant crone to whom the boy is entrusted in the first episode of "The Painted Bird"; in the book, Marta dies while soaking her feet in a bucket of water, and her lifeless body is engulfed in flames when the boy accidentally spills kerosene from a lamp. According to villagers, the real-life Marianna Pasiowa, a humble farmwife who lived in a thatched cottage, had aided not only the Kosinski family but other Jews as well, including an infant she hid in a hillside dugout and nourished on cow's milk.

Pas insisted on showing me the church in Sandomierz, where, I was told, the local priest, with the help of his parishioners, had hidden Jews in the presbytery. His instincts as a docent aroused, he went on to show us the church's distinctive feature—twelve frescoes surrounding the nave, one for each month, in which each day of the year is represented by a graphic and bloody depiction of Christian martyrdom. On a separate panel at the rear was a detailed depiction of the ritual murder of an angelic Chris-



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tian child by a group of rapacious Jews.

It was a village, clearly, where the iconography of anti-Semitism was so commonplace as to pass beneath consciousness; where the harassment of Jewish women could be presented as recreation. Even today, in the shadow of the Nazi genocide, there seemed to be little self-consciousness about these matters—and no acknowledgment that petty bigotries might relate to a larger atrocity.

The next day, Pas drove us to Dabrowa Rzeczycka, fourteen miles away and now virtually in the shadow of the emerging industrial center of Stalowa Wola. Situated on the west bank of the San River near the Janow forest, Dabrowa—to which the Kosinskis had retreated when the Germans tightened their grip on Sandomierz—rarely appears on maps, and no road sign announces it until the village is almost in sight. In Dabrowa, I spoke with Stefania Woloszyn and Edward Warchol, the daughter and son of the peasant landlord who had rented the Kosinskis a semidetached house for the final two and a half years of the war. They confirmed Siedlecka's story completely, repeating the allegations that after the war the elder Kosinski informed on the villagers to the N.K.V.D.

Warchol, now in his late sixties, lives in a prosperous-seeming two-story farmhouse with an underground garage. A sturdy, short-legged man, he emerged from the house putting on his shirt but never got past the middle button, which struggled to contain an expanse of flesh. He said he could not understand the fuss in Warsaw about Siedlecka, for in his eyes she had told the simple truth. "The Painted Bird," which he had not read until 1989, came as a shock. "We saved their lives," he said, brushing away tears with the back of his hand. "And he turned us into monsters."

Several events in "The Painted Bird" had their prototypes in Dabrowa. Young Jerzy Kosinski was attacked on the surface of the frozen pond by neighborhood toughs, who intended to pull down his pants and inspect his penis; Warchol, who was then seventeen, skated by to save him, and he vowed to me that Kosinski, unlike the boy in the novel, was never pushed below the ice. Similarly, some informants remembered the young Kosinski serving as an altar boy in the church at nearby Wola Rzeczycka, but denied categorically, and convincingly, that his dropping a missal ever led to his being beaten or flung into a latrine.

Before leaving Dabrowa, I had the eerie experience of staring into the face of a literary symbol. The villagers took me to the cottage of Lech Tracz, who had been damaged by "brain fever" in his youth and was now well into his sixties. As a young man, Tracz had the odd hobby of trapping crows, painting them with limewash, and releasing them in order to watch them being attacked by the rest of the flock. Lech Tracz (the fictional spelling "Lekh" is unknown in the region) still lives alone in a cottage festooned with handmade wooden bird traps and cages.

Having been summoned by his niece, Tracz did not appear for about twenty minutes: he had insisted on shaving—a laborious process, apparently—and finding proper clothes in which to meet "the American." Finally, a tall, thin man emerged, wearing baggy trousers, a loose-fitting jacket with a religious medal on the lapel, and an old-fashioned motoring cap. His movements were stiff and awkward, and he had a fixed, childlike smile. He spoke in a loud, affectless monotone, but it was hard to say to whom, because he met no one's eyes; rather, he seemed to stare off in whatever direction his body was facing.

"He apologizes that he can't tell you anything about the boy, but it's been a long time," his niece said. "If you had come while the boy was here, he says, he might have remembered."

In retrospect, two lines of reasoning might have suggested that "The Painted Bird" was something less—and therefore more—than straightforward autobiography. The first argument is simply a matter of statistics. There were about three and a half million Jews in Poland before the war; of those who stayed, roughly thirty-five thousand survived. The odds against survival were about a hundred to one. The odds for a family aided by abundant resources, a sound strategy, and good luck were still steep, but not insuperable. Split the family into two units, living in separate circumstances (as in the book), and the odds against both units' surviving approach ten thousand to one—not impossible, but far less likely.

The second argument has to do with the episodic intensity of the story. Kosinski's protagonist has a knack for riding into town just as the local pot of trouble is about to boil over. He arrives in one village just in time to see the brutal murder of Stupid Ludmila, and at the miller's house just in time to witness the plucking out of eyeballs. Unless one is prepared to believe that a woman is assaulted and eyeballs are plucked out at least, say, once every month or two, it follows that the experiences described in the book are heightened to some degree. Why didn't these arguments occur to readers at the time? The answer applies equally to "The Painted Bird" and to "Czarny Ptasior": people hear what they want to hear.

One might, of course, doubt even such seemingly guileless witnesses as the villagers. If they did not intentionally set out to deceive, might they not suffer from a certain selectivity of memory? Common sense would argue so. But the documents and the number of witnesses weigh against the notion of a conspiracy. At least in one particular, Siedlecka's version was backed up by Kosinski's postwar friends in Lodz: whatever may have happened to him during the war, they all agree, the young Jerzy Kosinski never lost the power of speech. Siedlecka's basic story was confirmed by more than a dozen informants in Sandomierz, Dabrowa, and Lodz. Kosinski was never separated from his parents for any significant period. The local peasants, living in a culture suffused with anti-Semitism, were scarcely free of its grip, but by all accounts these particular peasants did something brave and good for the Kosinski family during the war. "The Painted Bird" is fiction. Kosinski borrowed the atrocities from other accounts, or made them up.

And yet to say that Kosinski was not abused physically in the dramatic ways depicted in "The Painted Bird" is not to deny the psychological pain he suffered, along with his family, during the German occupation. The banal and unremarkable thuggery of village life was hardly unique to this period, but it could not have failed to leave scars on its victims. The Kosinski family would have needed only a suspicion of what was happening in the country around them to live in mortal dread. Confined to the narrow compass of polemic, Siedlecka shows little appreciation of why the painted bird, emblem of a nearly reflexive persecution of difference, might resonate for the young Kosinski, even in the absence of the outsize horrors to which his imagination later gravitated. He was, in a very real sense, both a Holocaust victim and a Holocaust survivor. He was also, as a longtime acquaintance of his from New York's Polish Institute put it, "an uneven man"—or, in the blunter words of Mira Michalowska, who knew Kosinski when she was working as a journalist in New York, "an absolute mythomaniac."

Does the discovery that "The Painted Bird" was a far more fictional work of fiction than Kosinski often suggested it was give readers who were moved by the book just cause for feeling cheated? His real story might have been every bit as compelling, in its way, as "The Painted Bird," but would the world have seized so eagerly upon an account of the less dramatic forms of harassment he had to take for granted as a Jew in the Polish countryside? Ironically, Siedlecka's revelations provide a convincing rebuttal to those who have argued that Kosinski is not the author of "The Painted Bird"; indeed, abstracted from its archival pretensions, the work gains in stature as an achievement of the novelistic imagination. Kosinski transmuted his wartime years into a version of the most primal and universal of plots: he was the hero and victim; everybody else was a villain. The trouble came when others took up his script. It served all too conveniently the purposes of various groups in need of a governing myth. It said what *should* have been true about both the German occupation and the Marxist regime. Even the Germans could take comfort in the book's implicit message that genocide was not a uniquely German phenomenon but a manifestation of a universally distributed human depravity.

Maybe it is only the historian's task to reassert the annoying complexity of events against the satisfying simplicity of a story line. If the novelist trimmed his experiences to accord with a personal myth, the narrative that resulted fell on receptive ears. Certainly it was a myth that the world, demanding purity and innocence of its victims, was all too ready to appropriate. Now all must profess to be shocked—shocked—that a practitioner of the liar's profession, a man who survived the war by living a lie, told lies. ♦

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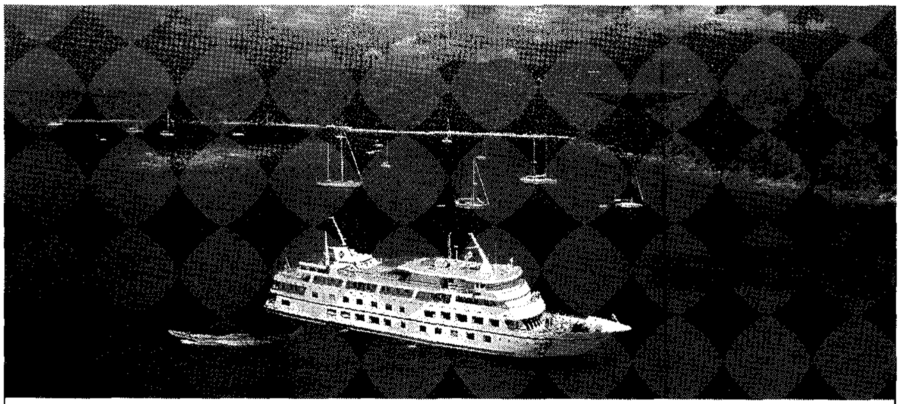

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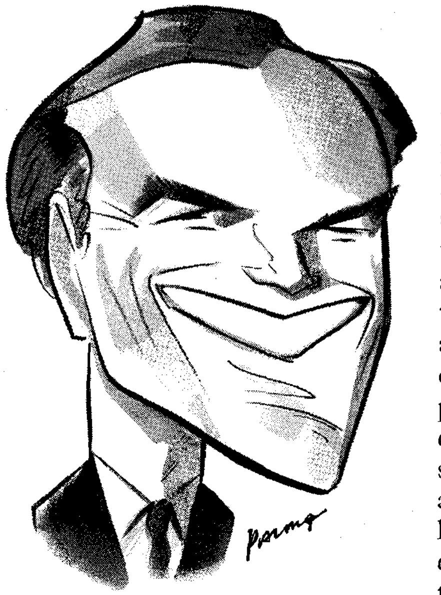
LETTER FROM CALIFORNIA

THE CANDIDATE

Having spent ten million dollars on his Senate race, Michael Huffington remains a cipher—but his very blankness is what appeals to an alienated public.

BY SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL

IT'S morning again in the town of Montecito—"California's garden paradise"—just outside Santa Barbara. We're watching on the TV screen as a tall, thin man, in a polo shirt and jeans, and his wife and two little girls bounce hand in hand across a field. Their hair is perfectly highlighted by rays of sun. The family portrait dissolves for a second into a frame of one of the lovely daughters, and that instantly dissolves to the father standing before an old stuccoed wall, with wildflowers at the bottom. He's rooted here, as though he'd been in this spot forever; the mere image conveys a sense of place. Only thirty seconds earlier, appalling scenes of disasters had raced across the screen. "With the fires, earthquakes, and a terrible recession, recent years have tested the people of California," intones the narrator. "Nearly a million moved away, but Mike Huffington and his wife came back to the state that educated him and is the birthplace of their two daughters." Huffington himself speaks: "This election isn't just about who you will send to Washington next year. It's about our children and their future." The music swells. On the screen come these words: "Finally. A Reason to Believe." Then another family portrait. We cannot hear the man, but he is saying something to his silently smiling wife, who is glowing with an inner peace. Her hand reaches over to groom the hair of one of the daughters, sitting in her father's lap.



Even some of California's local Republican leaders question the implications of the rise of the candidate who fell to earth.

In an earlier ad, Michael Huffington, a one-term congressman from Santa Barbara, who is the Republican candidate for the United States Senate, made a solo appearance. "You don't usually see Senate candidates reviewing books," he says. "But I think everyone should read this." The camera focusses on a thick volume, "The Book of Virtues," a best-selling collection of moral parables and essays edited by William J. Bennett, the conservative intellectual who was Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education and George Bush's drug czar. "Solving problems in our country depends on strong individuals and strong families—not on government," Huffington says. Against a dark background, he appears paternal but accessible, wise and friendly.

"Plain Speaking" reads the opening of another ad. "With hard work and luck, I succeeded in business," Huffington testifies. The faded Kodachrome image of an old photograph of a boy with a woman and a little girl appears. "I didn't grow up rich," he says. "We were middle class. I went to public schools. Then Stanford, then business, the Pentagon, family, Congress."

In still another ad, Huffington again instructs us, this time dressed as an outdoorsman, with the fog-draped Santa Ynez mountains—an image as-

ERIC PALMA

sociated in the Californian subconscious with Ronald Reagan—in the background. "In business you learn that higher taxes destroy jobs," Huffington says. "In government they never learn that lesson."

These commercials are more than the typical tools used in the selling of a candidate: they are the sum total of Michael Huffington's existence in the public mind in this Senate campaign. He is spending his personal fortune—estimated at upward of seventy million dollars—on ads at a pace that will set an all-time record: perhaps twenty million or more. He has spent ten million dollars to date, and no one knows where it will end—simply that it may be unprecedented. (The record for a Senate race is held by Jesse Helms, who spent almost eighteen million dollars in a 1990 North Carolina campaign.) With the exception of occasional appearances at carefully controlled events, Huffington is visible exclusively in thirty- and sixty-second segments. The video reel is the man.

Collectively, the ads suggest the making of a Californian. Through a few deft strokes of imagery, Huffington appears to be an incontrovertible son of the state. One of his ads is even titled "Real California," conveniently ignoring the fact that until 1991 Huffington, who is forty-seven, lived most of his life in Texas. The facts in his positive ads are few and, in their partial way, accurate: he did go to Stanford; he is the father of the two young girls in the ad; they were born in California; this woman is his wife; he wants to be a senator. The logic is that if you accept him as a father and husband—the perfect family man—then you should acclaim him as a senator. It is an inarguable selling point that requires a leap of faith.

In midterm elections notable all over the country for an extraordinary level of voter alienation, Michael Huffington is the purest candidate of all—almost untouched by experience. In the House of Representatives, he has been a tabula rasa for almost two years; his main achievement has been to propose an increase in the deductibility of charitable contributions. His very blankness appeals to the unsure. He is the opposite of "the man in the arena," Theodore Roosevelt's muddied and bloodied ideal of the politician. Huffington proudly presents himself as untainted. For an electorate that has come to regard politics itself as the problem, he seems to be a godsend.

Huffington stands at a confluence of fear, disillusionment, and rage among the electorate. He speaks about the coming convulsions of the millennium, but gives no specifics. He calls for the abolition of the welfare system, for much less federal government, and for much more almsgiving and volunteerism. The Huffington campaign has produced a "statement of purpose" (included in a press packet), which is the candidate's fullest expression of policy to date. It addresses only four issues: crime, the economy, illegal immigration, and welfare. (Education, the environment, foreign policy, health care, and transportation go unmentioned.) In every case, the statement blames Democrats and "government" for the problems, and offers Republican boilerplate in reply. "I want a government that does nothing," he told Margaret Carlson, of *Time*, last week.

Huffington has roused the alienated, but he has not yet inspired a full-blown movement. His invention of himself as a focal point of frustration and despair, who can be touched only on the television screen, has lifted him in the polls to parity with his opponent, Senator Dianne Feinstein, one of the most experienced figures in California politics and public life. Huffington has drawn some well-known supporters, including Jeff Sagansky, an executive vice-president of Sony Corporation of America, who will be co-host of a party for the candidate on October 11th. "He's got a rugged-individualist kind of mentality," Sagansky says.

But the half-lives of Huffington are staggeringly short. He is in constant need of replay and reinvention. He starts to dry up before the next time-buy. Michael Huffington is the host body for which more than just alienated voters have been searching. For a team of well-known political consultants, Huffington, the scion of Texas oil money, is the motherlode in the latest California gold rush. But he is not their find. His wife, Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington, is the prospector who staked the original claim. It is she who has brokered the Huffington marriage

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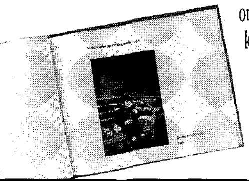

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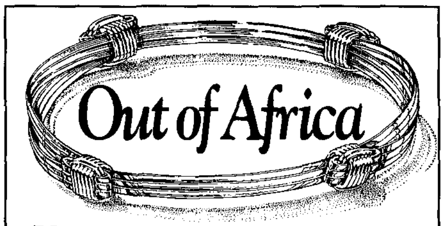

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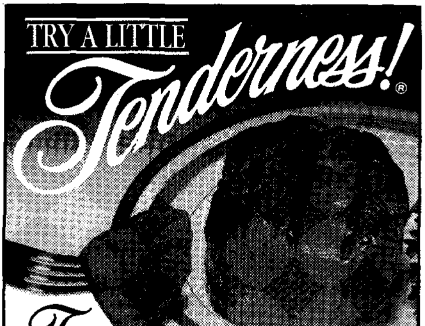

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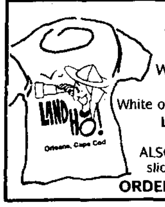

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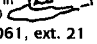

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of quasi-spiritual positive thinking and free-floating cynicism. She has pushed him out into the arena, though not too far, taking his place opposite his key opponent, former congressman William Dannemeyer, at candidate forums a half-dozen times. (This week, Huffington promises to show up himself for a scheduled debate with Feinstein on "Larry King Live.")

Today, his challenge is to become a senator; tomorrow, it is to become President of the United States—that is what Arianna has implied. Like the hero of Robert Heinlein's "Stranger in a Strange Land," he is the Martian candidate. The would-be leader of this apocalyptic revolt is hardly a messiah himself, yet there are would-be messiahs lurking in the background. His wife has been a minister in the Movement for Spiritual Inner Awareness, led by a guru named John-Roger, whose acronym—MSIA—is pronounced "messiah."

Essential to Huffington's appeal is the fact that he is unknown. His consultants are laboring to frame the campaign so that opposition to him may seem misplaced, emotionally out of synch, even desperate, in contrast to his burnished equanimity. To this end, he has lately refused almost all requests for media interviews (including mine), thus maintaining his perceived purity.

Even in his own party, he is not popular, and those who are most actively hostile to him are those who have glimpsed him most intimately. In his presumed political base—hard-core Republican leaders and fund-raisers of Santa Barbara County, whose neighbor and tribune was Ronald Reagan—some have such contempt for their congressman that a number of them are supporting Feinstein.

Barney Klinger, a major Republican fund-raiser in Santa Barbara, told me, "Huffington would make a very, very good apprentice at a McDonald's. He's totally devoid of any intelligence. He has no idea of what life is all about. With the money Daddy made, he can do anything he wants. He doesn't do anything. You can never get through to him. No decisions are made without going through Arianna, which means few decisions are made. I had lunch with them in 1992 in Montecito. Huffington wanted me to support him in the primary. Arianna and I discussed politics and business. He discussed household chores with my fiancée. You don't have to spend much time with him to see how superficial he is. When you look in his eyes, you see the back of his head."

Hazel Blankenship, the former chairman of the Santa Barbara Republican Party and a former member of the state Party's executive committee, is giving money to Feinstein. "Arianna says, 'Barbara and George started in Congress,' " Blankenship says. "I heard her say that. *She* is running the campaign, as far as I'm concerned."

A woman who observed the Huffingtons at close range for many years says, "She is the mastermind. In his earliest stage, he was like a nervous boy looking to his mother for dinner. He was wrapped around her." This intimate says that when he was not in camera range Huffington was "fearful, isolated," even "phobic." He was stringent in his habits and washed his hands frequently. He often concentrated his attention, this observer recalled, on objects that seemed to him out of order: crayons that might fall off a table and deface the floor, a broom leaning against a wall that ought to be in a closet. But now, with the campaign taking off, the onetime Huffington intimate suggested, "he's beginning to feel as if he's a star—at last, a star in his own right."

Jim Worthen, a conservative Republican activist in Santa Barbara, who hosts a local cable-TV show, was wooed by Arianna Huffington after the 1992 primary. "It is not about Congress," he says she informed him.

"He plans to run for President?" Worthen asked.

"He's destined for much greater things," she replied.

"If I could be President, obviously, then I would like to be President," Michael Huffington said when the question was posed to him, in one of his rare interviews. But for now, he added, "I would rather be a U.S. Senator than almost anything."

ARIANNA STASSINOPOULOS was born in 1950 in Athens. Her father was a newspaper publisher, but her parents divorced when she was young.

Over the years, her mother, Elli, and her younger sister, Agapi, have followed her all over, functioning as her support staff.

At Cambridge University, she won the presidency of the debating society, the Union—the first woman ever to do so. In response to Germaine Greer's "The Female Eunuch," she wrote "The Female Woman," a revisionist feminist book, in 1973, and it became a best-seller in the United Kingdom. The book catapulted her into the role of a sought-after and controversial talking head. She had a long relationship with Bernard Levin, a columnist at the London *Times*, who was twenty-two years her senior. With Levin, an English version of George Will, at her side, she bowled her way through the salons of Lady Hartwell, Lady Melchett, and the publisher Lord Weidenfeld, who in 1974 brought out her biography of Maria Callas. Plagiarism charges were levelled by another Callas biographer, and Arianna made an amicable out-of-court settlement.

In 1980, having exhausted London's social possibilities, Arianna departed for New York. "Concentrate on the women, and the rest will follow," Weidenfeld advised her. She arrived with an arsenal of introductions to various social Olympians, including Selwa (Lucky) Roosevelt, who became President Reagan's chief of protocol, and Ann Getty, the oil heiress and, for a time, Lord Weidenfeld's publishing partner.

Two decades after her London education, Arianna is a formidable charmer of the Pamela Harriman school—statuesque, exotic, spirited, and well informed. Like Harriman's, her modus operandi is enraptured focus. Her New York progress was a slapstick version of Edith Wharton's "House of Mirth"—as she borrowed designer gowns and jewelry and dated the likes of Mort Zuckerman and Jerry Brown. In just a few years, her ubiquity on the social scene had earned her such sobriquets as "the most upwardly mobile Greek since Icarus."

Another of her male friends was Werner Erhard, the founder of Erhard Seminars Training, styled "est," a now defunct mind-cure movement based on manipulative techniques of psychological seduction. Erhard's method involved making initiates vulnerable by getting them to admit their inner weaknesses and then building them up with simple slogans. If you declare goals, est taught, they become true. The est clarion call was "If you say it, you are it."

Arianna's relationship with Erhard was ephemeral, but her immersion in the spiritual-awareness movement was long-lasting. She began her involvement with the Movement for Spiritual Inner Awareness in 1973, while she was still in London, and eventually was put in charge of the organization's Seminar Headquarters there. "She carried it [MSIA] across the Atlantic on her back like Mother Courage," Peter McWilliams wrote in a disillusioned memoir of his membership in the cult and his years as the ghostwriter of John-Roger's self-improvement manuals. (McWilliams, who is currently being sued over an alleged unpaid debt to MSIA, has countered with a suit against John-Roger and others, charging fraud and emotional distress.)

Before an identity-transforming epiphany, John-Roger was known as Roger Hinkins and taught high-school English in Rosemead, California. In 1963, he awoke after a kidney-stone operation to discover that he was John the Beloved, the unique embodiment of the "Mystical Traveller Consciousness." He eventually proclaimed himself a savior, ranked above Jesus in the spiritual hierarchy. The "soul realm," he insisted, could be reached through faith in his higher consciousness. His precept was "Use everything to your advantage."

Arianna regularly coördinated training seminars for Insight, a group that recruited members for MSIA, and held dinners where John-Roger could meet her socially prominent acquaintances. "I knew Arianna very well," Peter McWilliams told me. "I was there time and again when she bared her soul to John-Roger." McWilliams claims that after a date she would sometimes phone John-Roger to tell him about it and seek advice. "She would get on the phone with John-Roger. That John-Roger has been at the center of her spiritual life for the past fifteen or twenty years is absolutely indisputable. He's not Shirley MacLaine, either." (Indeed, over the years charges against

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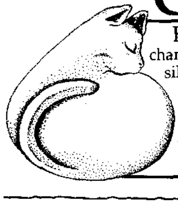

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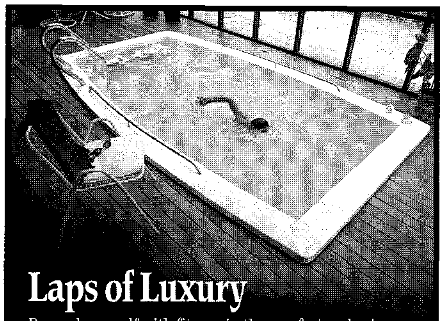

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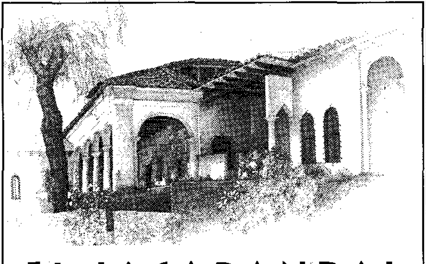

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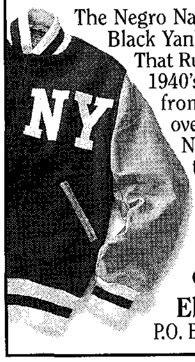

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John-Roger have been made in various publications by former cult members claiming to have received hate mail and death threats from him when they attempted to leave the organization.) Though Arianna insists she has had no involvement with MSIA for eight years, Victor Toso, an orthopedic designer and former MSIA member, says Arianna is "a profound and ardent follower. Her affiliation and affection for the man have not changed."

In June of 1978, MSIA's newspaper, *The Movement: With Love and Light for the Highest Good,* noted that Arianna had been ordained as a minister in the cult, a high position that required elaborate training. The ordination ceremony pledges the ministers to the "Order of the Melchizedek Priesthood, the Office of the Christ, the Mystical Traveller, Preceptor Consciousness, and into God. This delineates for you the divine line of authority by which you call forward God's Light to do work in this world." In 1984, according to McWilliams and Toso, Arianna travelled with John-Roger for weeks in the Middle East, and he baptized her in the Jordan River.

In 1985, Ann Getty told Arianna she'd met the man that Arianna was going to marry. Getty then introduced her to Michael Huffington. The wedding took place the following year, in New York. The reception, which was held at the Metropolitan Club, and reportedly cost between a hundred thousand and a hundred and fifty thousand dollars, was paid for by Getty. John-Roger and other cult eminences were seated in the main dining hall, while old friends of the groom's family sat out in the social Siberia of the hallway. "We'd almost given up on Michael," Roy Huffington, Michael's father, said in a toast.

"I AM the American Dream," Huffington says frequently. Roy Michael Huffington, Jr., was born in 1947 in Dallas, the son of an oil-and-gas geologist-wildcatter. He was sent to the Culver Military Academy, in Indiana, the military school of choice for the wealthy. After initially being rejected by Stanford, he attended Southern Methodist University, and then reapplied. Finally, Stanford accepted him. It was the height of the protest against the Vietnam War, and Stanford was in the thick of the antiwar movement. Speaking of his Vietnam position, Huffington told the Los Angeles *Times*, "I was basically neutral. But I think while I was there I was probably for it."

In the early nineteen-seventies, Roy Huffington, Sr.,'s Houston-based company, Roy M. Huffington, Inc., or Huffco, struck it big in an Indonesian gas field. As a result, his personal fortune grew to be among the largest in the country, and was eventually estimated by *Forbes* to be three hundred ten million dollars. By the mid-seventies, Michael had joined the family business. To his friends, he was the perfect embodiment of the amiable, laconic Texan. To his employees, however, he was a minor-league Captain Queeg, issuing edicts against the consumption of caffeine and worrying about tiny items like the company's supply of paper clips. His business record was mixed. Two subsidiaries for which he had arranged financing foundered. One of them, in Bakersfield, California, owed the state $6.7 million in unpaid taxes, and owed First City Bancorp of Texas six million dollars. (The loan was a contributing factor to the bank's collapse, in 1987.)

The same year as his marriage to Arianna, he secured a job in the Reagan Defense Department as deputy assistant secretary for negotiations policy, supervising the preparation of papers for interagency discussion. For a time, there was a note attached to his circulating résumé that said, "He comes from a prominent G.O.P. family." (His father was later appointed Ambassador to Austria by George Bush, a family friend.) Huffington was now buried in the bowels of the bureaucracy, and was regarded by a supervisor as a nullity. After a year, he quit the job and returned to the family business in Texas. But Arianna had no intention of settling in Houston. In 1990, Huffington helped push through the sale of Huffco, for an estimated six hundred million dollars—of which his share was said to be seventy million. "If there is an incentive for him, it is to prove himself apart from the father," says a Houston acquaintance. In the meantime, in 1988 Arianna published a biography of Picasso which depicted his art as misogynistic, and stirred a hornet's nest of dissenting Picasso experts.

EVEN before the Huffingtons left Houston, they had invested $4.3 million in a Mediterranean-style estate in Montecito called Villa Ruscello. The house was decorated like a stage set at the opera. Enormous curtains hung at the windows, and Italian artisans were imported to paint on the ceiling of one room, Michelangelo style, a reproduction of an Aubusson carpet on the floor. But despite the grand, theatrical setting and the bottomless bank account, Arianna often did not pay her bills on time, a longtime Huffington observer claims. A list of creditors was kept constantly at bay. Employees were always coming or going. According to this acquaintance, when Arianna fired employees she sometimes informed them that her decision had been made in a meditative state.

The only permanent staff seems to be her mother and sister, Elli and Agapi. As for Michael, this observer of the family said, he "holds on to Arianna. And she deals with him through confrontation, intimidation, and encouragement."

The Huffingtons soon ran afoul of some of Santa Barbara's élite. After inviting wealthy couples to dinner, Arianna tried to cajole them into attending Insight weekend retreats. When she was rebuffed one time, "she never called again," a wealthy Santa Barbaran who was briefly courted said.

In a matter of months after moving to California, Huffington began to show an interest in politics. "He was bored as soon as he got here," Hazel Blankenship, the Republican leader, says. "Young, bored, rich. We started chatting. After a few minutes, it became clear that he wasn't serious. He wouldn't entertain the possibility of the city council, or a state-assembly race that was coming up—that sort of thing. He wanted to start in a higher office. I just dismissed him. He and Arianna were not particularly active in the community. Nobody paid much attention to him."

"He never joined the Lincoln Club, the Republican Central Committee, and never made a contribution to any charity in the community," Barney Klinger, the G.O.P. fund-raiser, says. "Then he

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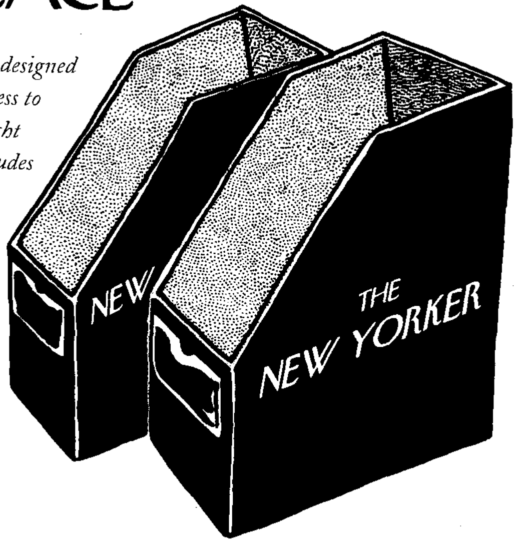

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decided to run. He gave money to the Lincoln Club, the Central Committee, and so on."

When the Twenty-second Congressional District of California, which had been represented for nine terms by Robert Lagomarsino, a conservative Republican with a history of strong constituency service, was redistricted for the 1992 election to include new counties, Huffington announced his intention to unseat Lagomarsino. At the behest of Republicans trying to discourage Huffington, Vice-President Dan Quayle urged him not to run. He went ahead anyway, overwhelming Lagomarsino with a harshly negative ad campaign that ended up costing the challenger $5.2 million—more than anybody had ever spent before on a congressional race.

Once in the House, Huffington rarely spoke on the floor and introduced little legislation. When the defense contractor Raytheon, which had a large plant in Huffington's district, needed federal regulatory relief in order to save two hundred and fifty jobs, he flatly refused to help, offering the explanation that he was not in the business of serving special interests. Raytheon turned to Senator Feinstein, who helped push through the regulatory assistance. Glenn Bunting has reported in the Los Angeles *Times* that during Huffington's two years in the House sixteen members of his original nineteen-member staff left. Some of them described him variously as secretive, erratic, and distrustful.

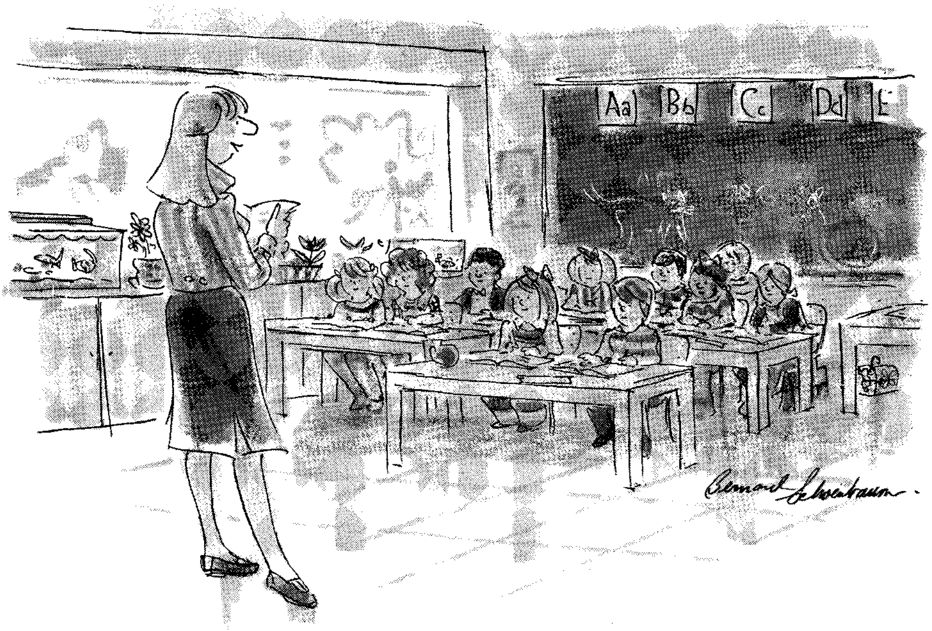
Huffington had promised local Santa Barbara Republicans that he would serve for at least two terms in the House. But on September 14, 1993, according to newspaper reports, a bizarre sequence of events took place. Huffington's congressional staff in Washington was frantic, because he could not be found. He had a full day's schedule of appointments and House votes ahead of him. That evening, in Los Angeles, he declared his candidacy for the United States Senate. And yet, when he returned to Washington, Huffington berated his staff for "leaking" the news. Later, he told reporters that he had made the decision a month earlier, after meditating alone for three days in a Greek Orthodox monastery on Mt. Athos.

In Washington, Arianna attempted to draw opinion leaders into her network. Journalists and prominent Washingtonians were invited to dinner at her new four-and-a-half-million-dollar mansion in Wesley Heights. I attended one such dinner, at which Arianna led her guests—who included Benjamin C. Bradlee, the former Washington *Post* executive editor; Michael Deaver, the onetime Reagan media adviser; Meg Greenfield, the *Post* editorial editor; and the television producer Norman Lear—down to the basement for discussions of mainly spiritual matters. Seated for dinner, we were all handed long readings and asked to expound on our personal theological views. At the end of the evening, we were chagrined to discover that Arianna had taped us. But the "Critical Mass" dinners, as Arianna called them, went on, with fresh guests.

The literary agent Morton L. Janklow, who had been Arianna's friend since she arrived in America, and would later become her agent, remarked on her transformation: "When she lived in New York, when she was collecting powerful friends, she was a person courting respectability. Now she's after power. If power collides with respectability, she'd rather have the power."

Earlier this year, Arianna came out with a new book, published by Simon & Schuster, a spiritual and political manifesto titled "The Fourth Instinct: The Call of the Soul"—a book that Janklow had declined to represent. On one level, the book resembled one of those dinner parties at which she dolloped out quotations from famous thinkers as if she were serving hors d'oeuvres. The quotations were interspersed with anecdotes about her family. But behind the slapdash construction lay a larger political purpose. Paraphrasing her husband's campaign theme, she wrote, "Under the reign of the Fourth Instinct, we will see ourselves, not government, as the most effective agent of social change." To Peter McWilliams, it all seemed familiar, an echo of the books he used to ghostwrite for John-Roger. "The central piece of the Huffington campaign is pure John-Roger," McWilliams says. " 'The welfare state is terrible. Individuals will get around it through a spiritual revival having something to do with a new millennium.' He's politically conservative but New Age."

The candidate depends on an all-star lineup of political consultants from the Reagan-Bush era: Ken Khachigian, a longtime California Republican



"Now you're probably all asking yourselves, 'Why must I learn to read and write?' "

operative; Ed Rollins, who most recently worked on Christine Todd Whitman's gubernatorial campaign in New Jersey, where he disgraced himself by claiming—falsely, he now says—that he bribed black ministers to suppress the black vote, thereby helping elect his candidate; and Larry McCarthy, who produced the notorious 1988 Bush ad featuring the black rapist Willie Horton. In the Republican primary against Dannemeyer, Huffington lost his own congressional district, but, with his blitzkrieg of commercials, he has now ascended in the polls. His ads command the most expensive time slots, yielding the greatest payoff percentage to the consultants. "I see a guy who has great personal resources," Khachigian told me. "He wants to participate. He decides to invest a lot of these resources in order to enter public service in his adopted state."

But, for all the media pyrotechnics, an unexpected issue has surfaced: Arianna's connection to John-Roger. She denies any current involvement with him or his organization, and has tried strenuously to distance herself from her past. Last week, in a radio debate with Bill Press, the California Democratic Party chairman, she said, "I have not been a minister since 1986. . . . When does the statute of limitations run out?" Huffington himself asserts that he knows nothing of the cult. "It was before I met her, so I wasn't knowledgeable," he says.

Yet documents cited by the Orange County *Register* last week show that from 1990 through 1992 Arianna donated thirty-five thousand dollars to a John-Roger spinoff group, the Foundation for the Study of Individual and World Peace. (The birth of her older daughter was listed in 1989 in the *New Day Herald*, the organization's newspaper.) Whether she contributes to MSIA, on the other hand, is unknown, because the Huffingtons refuse to release their tax returns. "People don't just drift away from John-Roger," Peter McWilliams says. He says he was invited to Arianna's Washington home last year to help her with the manuscript of "The Fourth Instinct." "She said she wanted the feedback of another minister," McWilliams recalls.

The cable-TV host Jim Worthen says that in 1992 he asked Arianna if

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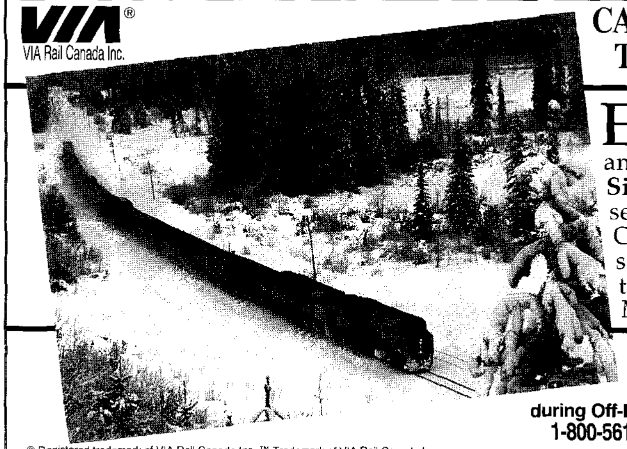

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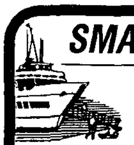

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she was a minister in MSIA. “She said no,” Worthen says. “At the next meeting we had, I was ready to throw down the gauntlet. I said, ‘I won’t support your husband because you lied about being a minister.’ She said, ‘How did I lie? Oh, Jim, it’s a misunderstanding. We are *all* ministers.’ ”

The determination that Arianna used so well in her social ascent is a weapon she now deploys in the campaign. But politics, she is discovering, is wholly unlike high society. Her affiliation with John-Roger has become a crucial political issue, because it threatens to disrupt her husband’s support on the religious right, whose Evangelical adherents consider cultism a form of satanism. MSIA and the Christian right are rival premillennialists, and Arianna now claims that she has become a born-again Christian. The middle of a campaign may be a dangerous moment to proclaim a new religious identity, but Arianna’s embrace of the Christian right can be seen as a bid for protective cover from the cult question. The concentrated focus she once turned on society in London and New York has been trained on the Christian Coalition, whose leaders she has courted intently. Ralph Reed, the Christian Coalition’s executive director, has been a guest on Arianna’s cable-TV show “Critical Mass,” and she herself has appeared on Pat Robertson’s “The 700 Club” and at many events with right-wing Evangelicals in Southern California. “She’s really tried to schmooze everyone up,” one Christian-right activist says.

Much of the leadership of the Christian right is supporting Huffington, because he is, after all, the Republican, even though he was one of the early supporters of gays in the military—a cause that is anathema to the religious right. “He’s not one hundred per cent on the issues,” Sara DiVito Hardman, the director of the Christian Coalition in California, told me. “He’s about seventy-five per cent. We think it’s better than Dianne Feinstein, who rated a zero.” Some Christian activists, however, are organizing a kind of underground movement against Huffington. “A lot of people have sold out,” one of them told me. “They have their own aspirations. They want to be chummy with the Huffingtons and all their money.” An open letter being circulated by a group of Christian Republicans warns fellow-believers, “There are many disturbing contradictions in her [Arianna’s] intimate involvement with this New Age cult. As Christians, we know . . . ‘Beware of the false prophets who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves.’ Matt. 7:14-15. . . . Please think Biblically before you vote.”

SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN has been the incumbent since 1992. Much of her life has been spent in government service. She was a member of the California Women’s Board of Terms and Parole, president of the San Francisco board of supervisors, and mayor of San Francisco. Over the years, Feinstein has carefully positioned herself as a moderate Democrat. Nothing bespeaks her political pragmatism more than her support of the death penalty. Her major accomplishment in the Senate has been to lead the fight for an assault-weapons ban, forging alliances to defeat the lobbying of the National Rifle Association. The issue for her is intensely personal, for she became mayor after the 1978 assassination of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. Above all, she believes in the ability of government to solve problems. Confronted with the latest polls showing her opponent drawing even with her, she seems stunned and beleaguered. Talking about running against Huffington, Senator Feinstein told me, “It feels very strange. I’ve served in this state. To see someone just come in—we learned he might run for the Senate one month after he got to the House. He’s not done anything for the state, doesn’t respond to his constituency. I feel terrible. To lose to this guy, whom I know in my gut has no interest in California, would be very hard.”

HUFFINGTON’S handler Ken Khachigian compares the emergence of his client to that of Ronald Reagan: “The message has many, many similarities. Huffington is saying, like Reagan, ‘I’m an outsider, government doesn’t need to be as big as it is to do its job.’ And Huffington’s growing. He’s fitting right in with the process quickly.”

Huffington, however, is very different from Reagan. Reagan was not an untethered figure. He was not a figment of his money’s imagination. He was handpicked to run for governor by a group of wealthy Republicans, and he had deep roots in the California culture—not only in Hollywood, as an actor and as president of the Screen Actors Guild, and not only as a spokesman for corporations, but as a political player. He had devoted followers; he was the unquestioned leader of the conservative wing of the Republican Party, and he led it to victory, in California and nationally. Though Reagan ran as a “citizen-politician,” the second half of that rubric was the equal of the first. Nor was he solely an airy ideologue. He was assiduous in his care and tending of California economic interests.

Huffington demands that more connections to government be severed. No political establishment holds him to earth. “The broad, cultural event toward which a critical mass is now building is the next breakthrough in our evolution,” Arianna Stassinopoulos Huffington prophesies in the conclusion of her new book. “It is the widespread acceptance of the imperatives of the Fourth Instinct.” She adds, “America began with a clear vision of the future, *Novus Ordo Seclorum*—‘a new order of the ages’—as it is printed on the back of the dollar bill. Now, after all the glorious achievements and tragic dead ends of the last two centuries, we have reached the point where we can make this vision a reality.”

Michael Huffington is the California mutation in this evolutionary process. His microscopic record has enabled him to take an absolutist stance. Because he is so slight a figure, he has become a vessel for more powerful forces, from alienated voters to consultants, from the religious right to his wife. He evokes catastrophe and then resolves the anxiety he arouses with a watery smile. He is the standard-bearer of a new premillennialist sensibility: the banality of apocalypse. ♦

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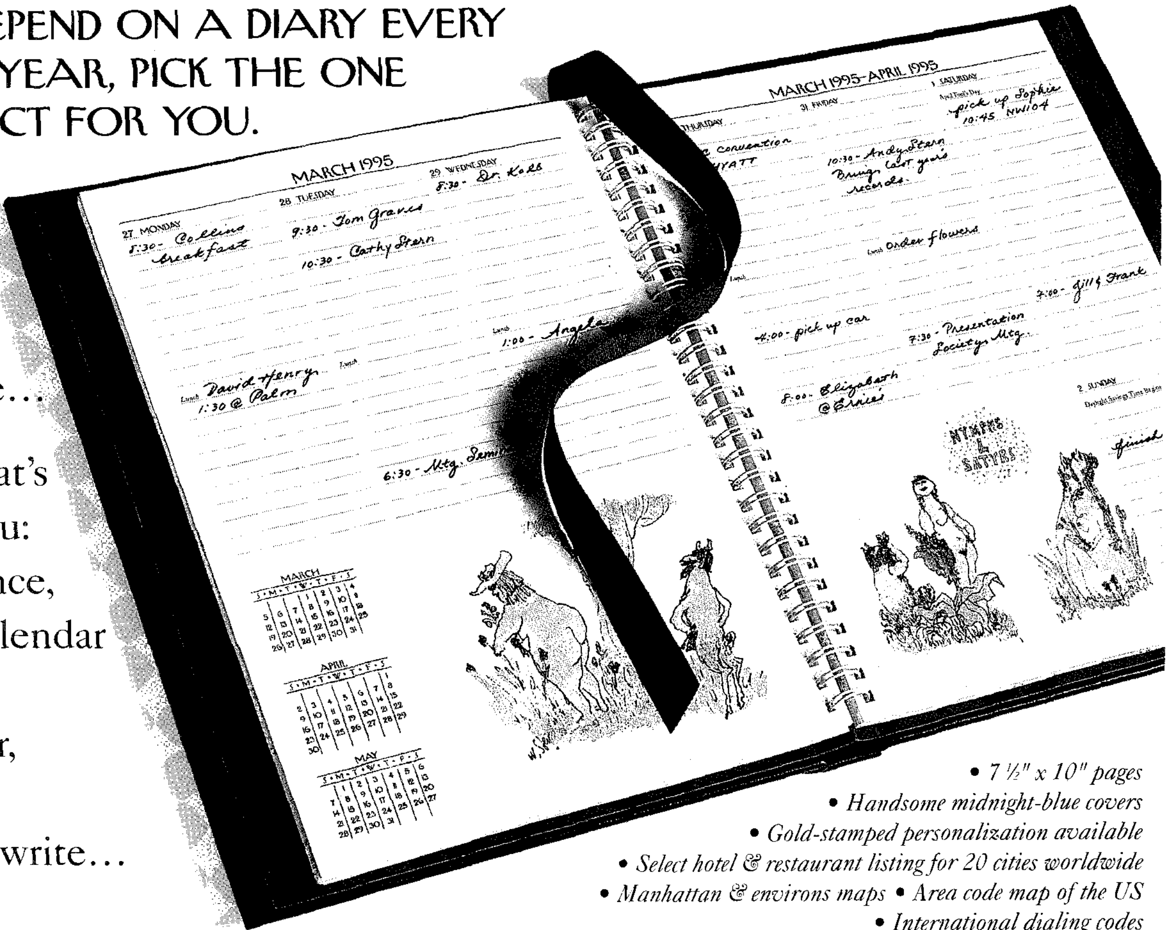

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27 MONDAY
5:30 - Collins breakfast
28 TUESDAY
9:30 - Tom Graves
10:30 - Cathy Stern
29 WEDNESDAY
8:30 - Dr. Kohl
Lunch David Henry 1:30 @ Palm
1:00 - Angela
6:30 - Mtg. Semi
MARCH
APRIL
MAY
MARCH 1995-APRIL 1995
THURSDAY
convention HYATT
31 FRIDAY
10:30 - Andy Stern Bring last year's records.
Order flowers
4:00 - pick up car
8:00 - Elizabeth @ Elaine's
1 SATURDAY
pick up Sophie 10:45 NW104
7:00 - Jill & Frank
7:30 - Presentation Society Mtg.
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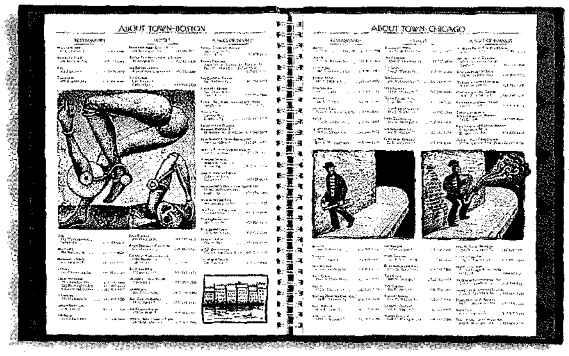

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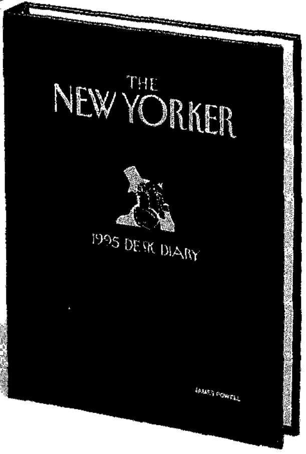

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JAMES POWELL

THE WORLD OF TELEVISION

ROCKING IN SHANGRI-LA

Not only has MTV redefined American popular culture but it has created an evolutionary corporate culture, where the real power brokers are those who are "in the demo"—employees under the age of twenty-five.

BY JOHN SEABROOK

A TALL rap singer named Fab Five Freddy appeared out of the gloom of Radio City Music Hall, folded himself into a seat behind Judy McGrath, and pitched her an idea for an MTV special about life in prison. McGrath, who is the creative head of MTV, listened with an expression of sympathy on her face. Sitting around her in the huge, dim hall was a small circle of young MTV people. Production assistants were talking on walkie-talkies to other P.A.s who were somewhere in the bowels of Radio City. Everyone was bathed in the glow of TV monitors and laptop computers that were set up on a board in the middle of one of the rows of empty seats, about twelve rows back from the stage.

McGrath let her bangs hang down over her eyes and looked out from under them, which she sometimes does when she's thinking. She rubbed her small, cute face dreamily. She was very calm, which is her characteristic business mode.

"Is it a morality tale?" she asked Freddy.

"Well, you know, the black man has had a hard life—" Freddy began, but he was interrupted by the crushing funk of Snoop Doggy Dogg, another rapper who is one of MTV's biggest stars, and would be performing at the 1994 MTV Video Music Awards, two days later. McGrath turned her attention to Snoop's rehearsal. Onstage, a huge crucifix hung over an open coffin. Dancers dressed as mourners were filing past it in misery and despair.

"You know how much shit I'm going to get for those crucifixes," McGrath said to no one in particular.

Snoop was offstage, and his voice was heard as though he were rapping from inside the coffin. He sang the first verse of "Murder Was the Case," from his album "Doggystyle," which has sold four million copies. In the song, Snoop is nearly killed in a drive-by shooting, but just before he goes to Hell he manages to make a deal with the Devil for eternal life, and proceeds to "smoke weed, never have a want, never have a need." It isn't clear whether the song is about Snoop's remorse over bad things he has done in his life or whether he is laughing at people who think he should be remorseful.

Freddy leaned forward and whispered to McGrath, "Guy charged with murder singing about getting murdered—very interesting." In Los Angeles in 1993, a twenty-year-old man Snoop knew was shot and killed from a car driven by Snoop, and Snoop, who has pleaded not guilty as an accessory to murder, will go on trial later this year.

Then Snoop himself appeared on the stage, in a wheelchair, with a mike in his hand. His eyes flashed, and he turned his head coyly and drawled his rap out of the side of his mouth. He got up from the wheelchair, and different parts of his slim body shifted cleanly in the little eddies in the music. As he walked offstage at the end of the song, he ad-libbed, scat-style, "I'm innocent, I'm innocent, or maybe I'm guilty."

"Well, you can't argue with the music," McGrath said. Her boss, Tom Freston, who is the head of MTV Networks, had questioned having Snoop on the Video Music Awards. Even if Snoop is innocent of the charges against him, there may be reason to suspect that he is not a very good dog, and not the sort of person, Freston had suggested, with whom MTV should be so prominently associated. The philosophy of the world Snoop raps about, which is, basically, "Fuck it"—that is, smoke chronic (a hip-hop word for good pot), keep on sipping that gin and juice, fuck bitches and hos, and, if some nigga disses you, shoot their ass—is not one that's easy to endorse. But McGrath had argued in favor of Snoop, because, as she told me, "Musically, Snoop is happening now, and we have a responsibility to our viewers to show that. It *is* sort of scary that this is the direction the music is taking us, but we're not really in control of that, and if we try to control it MTV is going to lose its edge, which is the thing that makes us great. Plus, it's a lot more meaningful to show this stuff—it's real. I'm sure if this were 1968 and I had put Hendrix on, people would have given me a lot of shit, too. You know, this is the world we live in. . . . I don't want to hold Snoop to a higher standard." She thought for a while, then added, "But if Snoop gets convicted I think we'll have to take him off the air."

I asked McGrath what *she* thought of Snoop.

"I'm a forty-one-year-old white lady," she said, smiling. "What do you expect me to think?"

She leaned forward and asked Doug Herzog, a senior MTV programming executive, "Are we concerned that we are smooshing our image together with Snoop's image?"

"Image is everything," Herzog said in a jokey voice. "Hey, we're the museum. We just hang the pictures."

"Come on—don't just give him a sound bite."

"O.K., he's innocent until proved guilty—how about that?"

McGrath leaned back. "I don't know," she said. "Maybe I'm not religious enough about the image."

The director of Snoop's performance

appeared on the edge of the MTV circle. He was intercepted by Traci Jordon, a producer who is McGrath's liaison to the rap-music industry. Traci said, "Now, Snoop's not going to say 'chronic' or 'nigger' or 'weed' in this song, like I just heard him say, right?"

"No, he's not going to say it," the director said. "Don't worry about that. It's just that it's hard for Snoop not to say it, know what I'm sayin', but Snoop knows that it's not in his interest to say it."

"For this I went to Catholic school," McGrath said.

After the last run-through was over, McGrath asked Traci whether it would be cool for us to go and meet Snoop, whose opinion of MTV was unknown to her. We assumed the languid attitude of people being taken to meet the talent, strolled down the aisle, and found Snoop hanging out backstage with members of his Dogg Pound. The cool inside the Snoop circle made an interesting contrast with the cool inside the MTV circle. The MTV cool was the feeling of just hanging out—of watching and reacting to things that happened around you, taking the energy that was offered and not giving it back. The cool of Snoop's circle was generated from within, and is a gift from Snoop to his listeners.

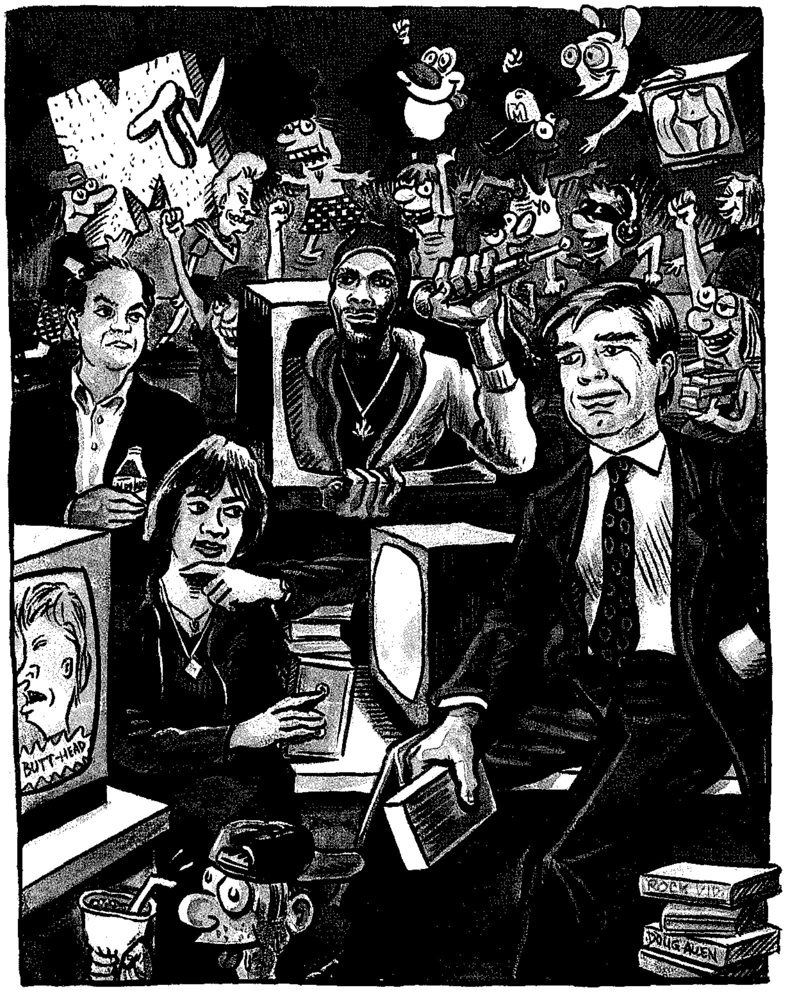
Traci said, "Snoop, I'd like you to meet Judy McGrath, the president of MTV."

One of the Dogg Pound said, "Yo, check it out, the president of MTV. That all right."

Snoop stood up to a full six feet four, put on his most debonair smile, took McGrath's hand, and said, "Yo, I just want to thank you for playing my videos and supporting me and having me here at this show, and I want to thank you for your support of hip-hop, you know what I'm sayin'." He made a little settling motion with his hand. "And that's all," he said. "Boom."

As we were leaving the stage, McGrath spotted Carole Robinson, who is the head of MTV press relations, and said, "Hey, we met Snoop."

"What happened?" Robinson asked, somewhat breathlessly.



"You can't argue with the music": the video-awards star Snoop Doggy Dogg with MTV's Andy Schuon, Judy McGrath, and Tom Freston.

DOUG ALLEN

"He thanked me!" McGrath said wondrously. She turned to Traci. "You didn't tell me how cute he is."

VIRTUALLY all the people who work for MTV can see MTV from their desks during the day. It is difficult to find a sight line at MTV that doesn't include a monitor showing MTV. The youngest employees often work with the sound on, partly because their bosses want them to absorb as much of the language and the sensibility of MTV as possible. (A writer who was interviewed for a job on one of MTV's game shows told me that he was asked, "O.K., do you know what 'phat' means?" "Yes, 'phat' means cool." "Do you know what 'fly' means?" "Yes, 'fly' means cool." And so on. And if you don't know something, he explained, then the interviewer says, "O.K., go home and watch a lot of MTV.") The older executives watch MTV with the sound off, which is the purest way to watch it, in the sense that you've stripped away the music, which MTV does not own, and are left with the images, or, rather, the process of blending the images into precisely the right cocktail of programming, which is the thing that does belong to MTV.

To get work done at MTV, you somehow have to trick your eyes—which are naturally drawn to the lollipop colors and frantic movement on MTV—into not staring at the monitors all the time. You want your eyes to receive the images in the way that the ear experiences sound—as ambience. This is the way the creators of MTV want you to consume it. MTV is visual radio; it's something you just have on. This is a fairly easy environment for kids who grew up in the seventies and eighties to adapt to, since the television was on pretty much all day while they were growing up, and the Bradys, the Fonz, and Mr. Kotter were like people they hung out with. But MTV ambience is surprisingly disorienting to people who grew up in the fifties and sixties, maybe because when Dick Van Dyke and Ed Sullivan were on the tube you sat down to watch them as though you were sitting in the audience. I am thirty-five, in between the two generations, and I adapted to the environment at MTV with mixed results. When I started going over to MTV, I found that although I was supposed to be observing MTV as a place that exists in the physical world, I often got distracted by MTV as it appears on TV. And while I was walking back along Forty-third Street to my office after spending the morning there I would find myself remembering things I had seen *on* MTV—the half gestures the rappers make with their arms, Janet Jackson's belly button, the Icelandic singer Björk dancing on a flatbed truck—more clearly than things I had seen *at* MTV. Sometimes, on leaving the building and walking into Times Square in the middle of a hot summer afternoon, after I had been inside MTV for three or four hours, I would experience a two- or three-second synapse breakdown, when I wasn't sure whether I was passing young bodies on the sidewalk or watching them on TV.

MTV's head office is on the twenty-fourth floor of the Viacom Building, a green glass skyscraper at Forty-fourth and Broadway, in Times Square. On the floors below MTV are VH-1 and Nickelodeon, MTV's sister channels, and on twenty-five is MTV Networks, the parent company, which is run by Tom Freston, and above that, on twenty-eight, is the office of the grandfather of MTV, Sumner Redstone, who controls Viacom, which owns MTV Networks. White-birch tree trunks line the corridor that leads from the elevator on twenty-four to the reception desk, and the desk is an enormous plaster-of-Paris rock, symbolizing rock and roll, on which the corporate ideology of MTV is founded. "Take a right at the rock," McGrath told me, "and my office is right down the hall."

When you are in your early twenties and are working for MTV, you carry in your brain, muscles, and gonads a kind of mystical authority that your bosses don't possess. Doug Herzog, who is in charge of all long-form programming, told me that when someone comes to him with an idea "I may say, O.K., I like it, but I'm not in the demo." The "demo" refers to the eighteen-to-twenty-four-year-old demographic sweet spot that all MTV programming tries to hit. "If I'm in love with something," he continued, "then an alarm bell should go off." Geoffrey Whelan, a twenty-nine-year-old staff writer, says, "Interns carry a ton of authority around here. When an intern says, 'Well, my friends think so-and-so,' everyone listens up." When I asked Tom Freston about this, he said, "I used to call up the programming guys and say, 'Why don't we play more of the Chieftains?' or whatever, and they would just laugh at me. So now I stay out of it." Later, he said, somewhat ruefully, "They come in here and yell at me sometimes." Brightening, he added that at least he got to behave in a similarly unconventional manner with *his* boss—the president of Viacom, Frank Biondi. "The only orders I get from Frank are 'Don't get arrested.' "

Victoria Roberts

"O.K., maybe there's no chemistry left, but there's still archeology."

Employees who are in the demo at MTV are, for the most part, college interns and production assistants, who make little or no money (all the interns are unpaid, and Freston once described the assistants' working conditions as "a couple of cuts above the Industrial Revolution") and are crowded together in warrens and windowless offices in the middle of the twenty-fourth floor. A lot of these young people have recently moved to New York, and have in MTV an instant source of roommates, dates, cool friends, parties, and free concert tickets which is the envy of everyone else they know. Although they are mostly gofers—they pull videotapes from the wackily colored file cabinets in the central hallway, and may even be called upon to set up producers' lunches or take out the garbage—you often see the demo kids performing their chores with a joyous and ironic enthusiasm that recalls Dean Moriarty in Jack Kerouac's novel "On the Road." ("Absolutely, man, I definitely am going to letter those cue cards right now, that's an excellent idea," I once heard someone say.) The video jockeys, or v.j.s—the on-camera personalities who introduce the videos—whom you might expect to be the stars of the demo scene, are in fact regarded as mildly uncool by the demo kids in production, and rarely show up on twenty-four.

The spirit of rock and roll is most palpable in the warrens where the demo kids work. The walls of the cubicles are covered with rock-and-roll posters. There is usually music playing somewhere, and employees who think that a particular song "rules" are encouraged to crank it. It is a breach of office etiquette to ask your co-workers to turn their music down. "First, you close your door," Whelan explained to me. "Then you ask them to close their door. But you *never* ask them to turn the music down." Sometimes, when two demo kids, each carrying an armload of tapes, approach each other, you'll see one of them break out of normal walking stride and slide into dance mode—head bobbing, shoulders twisting to the beat, lips pressing together—and the other person will respond by grooving to the tune a little, too. As the two cross paths, one of them will say, "I love this song," and they'll rock out together for a moment before continuing along the hall.

Earlier this summer, Tim Healy, a twenty-two-year-old P.A. in his second summer at MTV, was gofering on the set of "Top Twenty Video Countdown," which on this particular week was being hosted by Ted Danson. Danson showed up, and it quickly became clear that he was going to have trouble on camera. Anastasia Pappas, who is the producer of the show, explained, "He said, 'I don't know the music, I don't know the attitude, you got to help me.' " Tim, who knew the MTV attitude instinctively, in a way that Danson, for all his acting experience, could never know it, said, "No problem, dude, I'll help you out," or words to that effect, and, without rehearsal, stepped in, became Danson's co-host, and got Danson through the show.

As an employee emerges from the demo, he or she can become an associate producer, or A.P., and then, while the feeling of being in the demo is still fresh, a full-fledged producer. This period, when you're in your middle twenties, is a heady time to be at MTV. Ted Demme is a thirty-year-old director who had the classic MTV experience. He started as an intern, got a job as a P.A. after college, and was a producer by the time he was twenty-four. "As a producer, you do a little of everything," he told me. "Comedy, 'Top Twenty Video Countdown,' promos, the Video Music Awards. I got the idea for 'Yo! MTV Raps,' made a pilot, they put it on the air, the overnights were excellent, and in a couple weeks it went to an hour every day. It was like—left hand, right hand, left hand. MTV really opened up the whole world for me. Where else can you be on top of the world at twenty-five—have 'producer' on your business cards, talk to the head honchos at record companies, talk to talent, and do whatever you want?" Demme left MTV at age twenty-eight to make movies, and his credits include "The Ref," starring Denis Leary, and "Who's the Man," with Dr. Dre and Ed Lover. He recently worked on an episode of "Homicide." But he misses MTV, and, like a star high-school quarterback who keeps coming back after he's graduated to sit in the stands and watch the games, he often returns to the twenty-fourth floor. "The thing I really miss is coming up with an idea on Monday, pitching it on Tuesday, writing the script on Wednesday, shooting on Thursday, cutting it Friday, and seeing it on the air on Saturday—that was the greatest high."

When you hit your late twenties at MTV, a weird career anxiety begins to set in, which is the reverse of what happens in most businesses. Just at the age when people in other companies are starting to get loaded down with real responsibilities, people at MTV feel the pressure to leave, so that others who are closer to the demo can be brought up to take their places. Tom Freston told me that the average age of MTV employees was now twenty-nine—four years older than the average age in 1981, when MTV started—and that the average was rising at a rate of six months a year. A producer said, "It's like 'Logan's Run' around here—you know, everybody over thirty disappears." For people at MTV who have bungee-jumped from intern to P.A. and on to A.P. and producer—people "who don't know that this isn't what the real world is like," as one writer put it to me—the prospect of taking a job at a television network or an advertising agency is not pleasant. Glenn Ribble, a senior producer who started as a P.A. and left MTV at twenty-five to work as a freelance director of commercials and music videos, said to me, "There I was just handed the storyboards—the idea had been worked out by other people—and told, 'O.K., here's the way we want it, go shoot it.' Whereas at MTV I could do the whole thing myself." Now he is back at MTV.

At the age when most people start dressing and behaving more conservatively, people at MTV adopt even more radical attire or fill their offices with even more rock-and-roll memorabilia or start talking even more like the moronic characters in "Beavis and Butt-head," one of MTV's most popular shows. Nevertheless, I was told by one twenty-eight-year-old writer, "On some days, you'll see some kid coming down the hall and start rocking to the tune that's playing, and you realize you just don't feel like it. You know, you're busy, you're tired, you've got stuff to do—whatever. And the kid says, 'Come on!,' like it's uncool of you not to do it. That's when you know you're too old for MTV."

Judy McGrath grew up in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and her voice still has traces of her home town in it, although it seems to have slowed down and become more aware of itself, in a way that gives it a distinct Manhattan flavor. When McGrath was very young, she

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HARM

First, you took the parakeet out of its cage,
Its body warm and folded, a blue-green kite
With a surprised heart. Then you scoured the metal,
The door a loose pocket of bars on two wire hinges,
The tray floor, the seed and water dishes,
The clawed perches, the swing and its endless dialogue
With the invisible. Slowly, you removed the racks
From the dishwater and placed the cage in it.
We laughed at your ingenuity, at the way
It expressed your secret ambition to be
The one least mauled by the predictable.
And I think I knew then that I would carry on this hope
Of yours. There is such harm in love.
But let it be the green-and-blue acrobat it is,
A tropical danger in the midst of my body,
The body that you built for me.
Let it be the cage you cared for from which
Birdsong was pulled into the cool and colorless air.

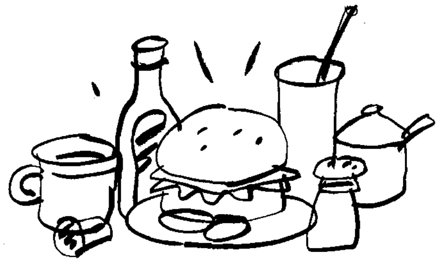
—Vickie Karp

used to stand on a chair and pretend she was Leonard Bernstein conducting an orchestra. She spent most of her demo years getting a B.A. in English from Cedar Crest, a women's college in Allentown, where her youthful ambition was to be a writer for *Rolling Stone*. She worked briefly as a copy chief for *Mademoiselle* and as a senior writer for *Glamour*, and joined MTV shortly after it went on the air, starting as a copywriter in the promotions department. (She was then twenty-eight.) The "Devo Goes Hawaii" and "Win a One-Night Stand with Pat Benatar" spots were two of her early ideas. She became director of on-air promotions in 1987 and the creative director of MTV in 1991. Recently, she became president of MTV, which brings both the financial and the creative sides under her authority.

One afternoon as we were sitting in her office, McGrath said, "You know, I sometimes feel that maybe a twenty-year-old person should be doing the creative-director part of my job. Why am I doing it? What do I know about being twenty?" In her office, she had a picture of her with Bono; R.E.M. and Nirvana decals stuck to her door; a Melvins poster propped up in one corner; and in another a large cutout of Elvis holding a rhinestone guitar. From the windows there is an amazing view of lower Manhattan, the Hudson River, and northeastern New Jersey, but the dominant view in McGrath's office is of the television set, and when you go there for a meeting you have to remember to sit so that you, McGrath, and the TV are in the proper relationship to each other. At one of our early meetings, I made the mistake of choosing a seat across from McGrath at the round glass table that she uses as a desk, which gave me the best possible eye contact with her but put the TV behind me. What happened was that McGrath made eye contact with the TV, and I looked over her shoulder and out the window at two of the four faces of the huge clock atop the old Paramount Building, right across Forty-fourth Street, which stopped years ago (one face says 4:35, and the other says 5:50), and which McGrath says serves her as a convenient symbol of her peculiar state of arrested development. During the meeting, I found my body turning almost instinctively away from McGrath and toward the TV, until by the end of our conversation we were deployed in a triangle familiar to anyone who has sat around watching MTV with friends.

"I guess my job is to keep us focussed on a vision," McGrath continued. "Is the global thing the MTV vision, is it that we're not like other TV networks, is it that we are a TV network for youth? What is the vision? Every now and then, I say we need to start stressing the global thing, or whatever, and the staff throws up all over it, which is the right thing to do. They're very truthful, and it's in my best interests to take their lead. Sometimes I take the lead by reminding them of the hidden principle in what they do, showing them how the music can be used for pro-social stuff—I think that's what I do best. My job is to keep reminding them that their work is worth something—that it's more than just doing promos for 'Top Twenty Video Countdown.' Because of the nature of MTV, there is a certain anarchy to the place, so people tend to push the edge of things, and sometimes I step in and say this is over the line, and they rail. But they know I came up through MTV and I love MTV, so I think they trust me."

We were watching MTV. By this time, I had learned how to include the TV in the conversation. MTV was a relay through which the dialogue was passed, and a little booster for when it lagged. Switching back and forth between talking to each other and talking about the videos was as easy as hitting the "last channel" feature on a remote control. We had watched a block of Snoop and Dre, and now the young slacker known as Beck was singing "Loser." The sound was muted, but Beck's voice—that tired, goofy voice ("I'm a loser, baby, so why don't you kill me")—was playing in my head. I felt good. Time spent in McGrath's presence is almost always pleasurable, and when you are out of her presence it is difficult to remember why. McGrath has survived the MTV winnowing process because she has the ability to create an environment where people feel comfortable creatively misbehaving. She's like the ideal much older sister, who lets you get away with things your parents wouldn't but nevertheless looks out for you. For this, she is loved by her staff. One writer said to me, "Judy would be the heart of MTV, if MTV had a heart."



We talked about Beck, whose first album, "Mellow Gold," includes such anti-baby-boomer anthems as "Nitemare Hippy Girl" ("It's a New Age letdown / In my face / She's so spaced out / Then there ain't no space"). Beck himself seems to be a lightning rod for people McGrath's age, who want to think that today's youth are a bunch of no-good whiners. I said to her that it seemed to me that the poignant thing about people who make MTV their career, as McGrath has done, is that the older they get, and the more knowledge and expertise they accumulate, and the higher in the organization they climb, the further they get from the feeling of youth, which is the thing that the whole institution is built on.

McGrath thought about this. Beck was cavorting around a fire with an animal mask on his head. "People who work at MTV will tell you that this place is like 'The Little Prince'—you never want to grow up—and that's true," she said. "I still care about who the next Nirvana is. And I don't know why. I am still trying to understand what the feeling I get from this stuff means. What are young people saying? What are they thinking about? I just want to know. You know, I listen to the band Live and I hear a spiritual element in their music and I think, Hmm, is this coming back?"

I asked McGrath what she thought about all the kids out there at home right now who were watching Beck and feeling like losers themselves.

"My hope is that they would get some release out of the music, that the music speaks to them in some way," she said. "I think part of MTV is escape and fantasy, and those are good qualities. It can be pro-life in the best sense of the word—it shows you this world out there. You know, those people at home are part of the reason we do pieces about teen-age suicide and all the other public-service things we do. I hope that this stuff gives kids some hope. I also hope that kids aren't just lying around all day and watching MTV."

Aerosmith's video "Crazy" came on, featuring the lead singer Steven Tyler's daughter, Liv, who is seventeen.

McGrath said, "I find myself thinking (I guess I am middle-aged now), What should I do with the next part of my life? Is it possible to be fifty and be doing what I'm doing now? And I want to say no, but then I don't want to make the mistake Mick Jagger made—saying he wouldn't be performing at fifty, and he just turned fifty-one. And what else would I do? There's a feeling among us who work at MTV that we are ruined for any other job—for society—because at no other company would we find what we have here."

"Which is what?" I asked. I was checking out Steven Tyler's daughter's butt while she pumped gas in black leather pants that were as tight as her father's.

"The chance to be forever young, I guess. I think MTV keeps you stuck in that place. You know, I still pay bills, make mortgage payments, go out to adult dinner parties, but here I just get to be the person I was in college. Wait." She unmuted the TV. "Have you heard this song?"

"Protection is a thing of the past, Eddie. You're looking at a supplemental-health-care provider."

Chrissie Hynde's new video, "I'll Stand by You," was on. "I love this song," McGrath said.

A long-haired young man appeared to be in despair, and Chrissie was trying to comfort him.

"Is that supposed to be her son?" I asked.

"No!" McGrath said, somewhat indignantly. "Her boyfriend."

"Is he a junkie?"

"I think he's just sick."

"Look," I said. "He's dead right there, isn't he?"

"Yeah, but he comes back to life at the end."

THE promotions department is often said to be the core of MTV. Everything on MTV is a promotion for something, and the promo department's mission, in a sense, is to promote that. One of the reasons that MTV is a landmark in the history of media is that the boundary between entertainment and advertising has completely disappeared. This is also one of the things that occasionally make you feel weary in the soul when you are watching it. MTV uses youth, which is beautiful and pure, to sell music, clothes, skin cream, and, of course, MTV. The exact nature of the MTV commodity is difficult to define. Once, I tried to get McGrath to do it. She said, "You're selling a feeling about what it means to be . . ." She paused for a few seconds, and then said, "God, I don't know."

It is in the promo department that the magical process of stamping the MTV brand name on the feeling of youth takes place. One of the set pieces in any young producer's or writer's career at MTV is making an MTV promo spot, the basic purpose of which is, as Abby Terkuhle, the head of the department, told me, "to make you feel good about watching MTV." In his office, which is just down the hall from McGrath's, Terkuhle showed me a mission statement that he gives to his staff, which read, in part, "Because it believes in rock and roll, MTV today is television's most powerful source of freedom, liberation, personal creativity, unbridled fun and hope for a radically better future. MTV keeps you plugged in." The fixed elements in the promo spots are time (usually ten seconds) and the presence of the MTV logo, but you are free to change the shape of the logo, and in terms of the history of logo design that freedom is one of the revolutionary things about MTV. When you watch MTV, you see a promo spot every ten minutes or so, and new ones appear all the time: a metal butterfly lands on a book and spreads its wings—there's the MTV logo—and then a green woman flicks out her long tongue and swallows it; a greasy and obnoxious New York cabdriver with the logo hanging like a good-luck charm from his rearview mirror drives his passengers crazy with his monologue about, among other videos, the new one by Boyz II Men. Although some promo spots are expensively produced—at MTV, it's not unheard of for fifty thousand dollars to be spent on a thirty-second image promo and twenty-five thousand on a half-hour show—most have the feel of art-school projects. Robert Jason, twenty-six, showed me how he had created the runny, distorted quality of the opening shots and graphics for "Top Twenty Video Countdown": by shooting stills of his baby daughter, printing the stills on a color printer, and then filming the stills through his aquarium at home. When I walked into Jason's office, he was crouching on the floor lighting a cigarette. His office was in amazing chaos. There were pillows and books and scripts and strange props piled all over the floor, and on the wall were two pictures—one of an Asian woman and the other of a selection of canned meats. "These are the materials I use in my work," he said solemnly.

One of the challenges that the promo staff at MTV faces which the promo staff at, say, NBC does not face is that time is relatively unimportant on MTV. Almost nothing on MTV is live, although everything *feels* live. There are no seasons, prime times, or special days. Most of the video programming is prepared a few days to a week in advance. On MTV, spring break is still going on months later, and the MTV New Year's Eve party has been rebroadcast in March. "The networks can say, you know, 'Big laughs on Thursday, tune in,' " Geoffrey Whelan said. "Here we have to promote shows that aren't married to days. They may run at any particular time, so we need to take a more general approach, like 'plug in.' " Whelan also told me about writing episodes for "Beavis and Butt-head"; he has done nine of them. "The main challenge in writing 'Beavis and Butt-head' is to be as dumb as you possibly can be," he said. "Your natural instinct in writing is to be clever, but Beavis and Butt-head are so stupid that if it's anything clever you have to give it to another character. You can't assume Beavis and Butt-head know anything. No cognitive leaps."

From the point of view of the record industry, the purpose of MTV is to promote music. The music videos, which are the foundation of MTV's programming, are paid for by the record companies and the recording artists and are usually provided free to MTV, which, in turn, provides the music with instant, free exposure. Each year, the record companies make hundreds of new videos, some of which cost half a million dollars to produce, and MTV plays only about half of them. It irritates people in the music industry that, as MTV has got older, it has tended to show fewer videos and more of its own programming—news, drama, game shows, comedy, dance shows, cartoons. The most common complaint about MTV that I heard from people my age, who were in the demo when MTV started, is that the "new" MTV doesn't play as many videos as the "old" MTV did. People at MTV are very sensitive about this charge, and are quick to point out that they are showing as much music programming as ever. Now, however, the videos may run on "Beavis and Butt-head," or on "The Grind," which is MTV's version of "American Bandstand" (though the kids are wearing less), or the songs may be heard on the soundtrack of this week's episode of "Dead at 21" or "The Real World." The packaging, they say, has become more elaborate, but the basic promotional commitment is the same.

Ratings are the main reason that MTV started to produce more of its own programming. MTV went on the Nielsen ratings system in the early eighties, and as the pressure to sell ads mounted, the importance of ratings increased. ("I rue the day Nielsen came into our lives," McGrath told me.) The system credits a rating to a program if a household watches it for most of a fifteen-minute interval, and hardly anyone watches fifteen minutes of videos. Video programming is about the worst possible thing for your ratings. "When you run music videos, you run ten programs an hour," Tom Freston has said. People who like to watch Mariah Carey belt her heart out will hit the clicker when Henry Rollins starts screaming. The half-hour and hour-long shows now on MTV were devised to get people to put the clicker down.

Last spring, it was reported that Sony Music, Warner Records, PolyGram, and EMI—which together control eighty per cent of Germany's successful VIVA music-video channel—planned to join forces with BMG and Ticketmaster to start a similar channel in the United States. It would show only music videos, like the old MTV, and would compete with the new MTV. This was widely seen as a sign of the record industry's frustration with MTV. The plan has been put on hold while the Justice Department is investigating whether such a channel would violate antitrust laws, but around MTV the potential challenge is still taken very seriously. At the least, it may mean that the record industry could begin charging MTV for the use of its videos, and that it might restrict access to certain exclusive videos.

"I've got no problem with competition," Viacom's Frank Biondi told me. "If the record companies want to play more of their videos, God bless 'em. Go out, start a channel. They say MTV is no longer a music channel. That's not true—the fact is we're playing more music than ever—but, for whatever reason, the perception is we're no longer a music channel. Fine. Start your own channel. But don't boycott me and don't price-fix me. There are quite serious laws in this country, the Clayton and Sherman Acts among them, that don't allow this kind of thing."

ONE day around lunchtime, while I was hanging around in McGrath's office, the phone rang. It was Tom Freston, and she put him on the speakerphone. Freston was calling to confirm a meeting with McGrath in his office after lunch. He then asked me about a trip I was about to take to Southeast Asia, and said, "I was there during the war. I mean I wasn't in the war—I was on the fringes of it." He chuckled. McGrath smirked. "Just what exactly were you selling over there, Tom?" she asked. The logic of MTV is such that the farther up in the organization you climb the more insouciant and rebellious you have to appear; therefore, Freston, as the head of MTV Networks, is the person who has the most to gain from the in-house joke

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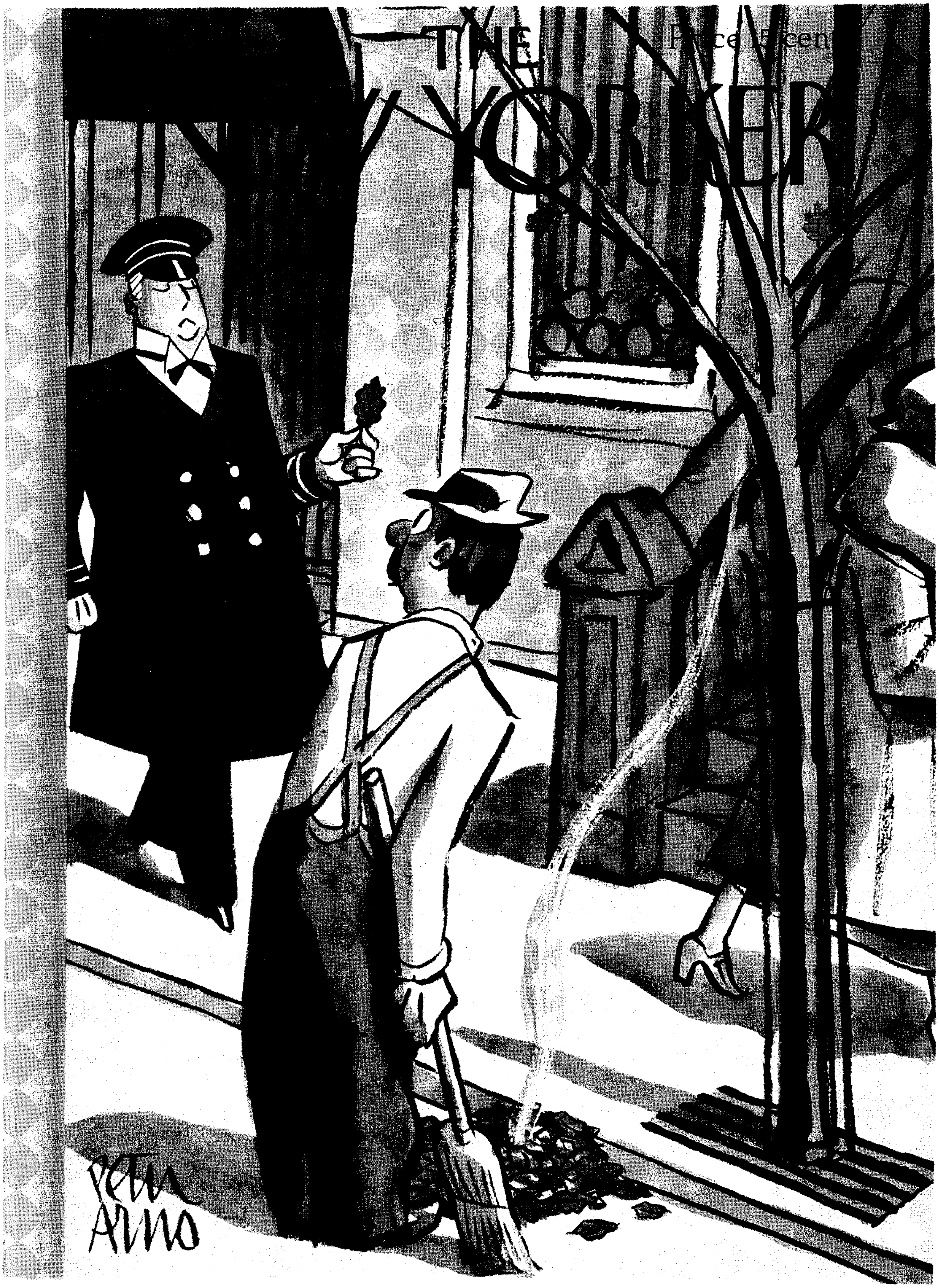
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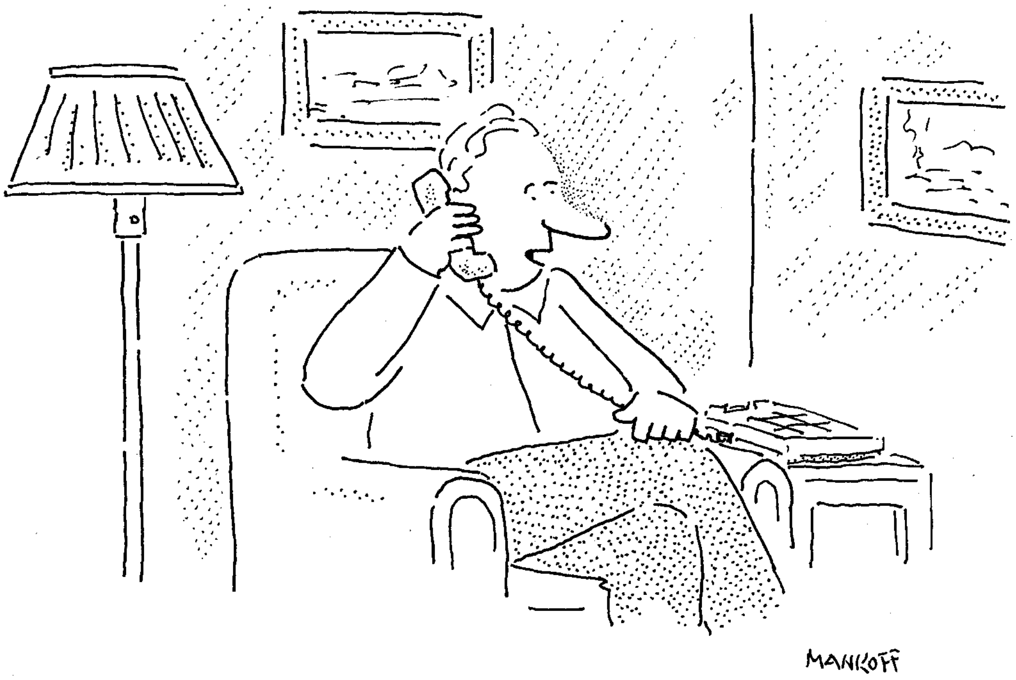


"I think I'll pass—I'm having a really bad-nose day."

• •

that he had a previous career as a drug dealer.

McGrath's lunch that day was with Danny Goldberg, who was formerly the manager of Nirvana and is now the president of Atlantic Records, which handles such acts as Stone Temple Pilots and the Lemonheads. He and McGrath are buddies, so there was a fair amount of industry gossip at lunch, and, as always, he tried to sell her on some new bands that would look great on MTV. On the way back to her office, McGrath shared an elevator with the senior producer Glenn Ribble, who was carrying a large old clockface that he had bought for a dollar from a guy down on Prince Street, because he thought it might make a good prop in a promo. Also in the elevator were two interns who were completely trashing Lisa Loeb, a twenty-five-year-old singer-songwriter whom MTV is grooming as a new star. One intern said mockingly that he was going to shoot a video of himself walking around his apartment and earnestly telling the camera about *his* romantic problems, the way Loeb does in her video "Stay." McGrath listened quietly, with some dismay, and when she got out of the elevator told me she hoped that a theory of hers—that Loeb was part of an emerging genre she was calling "dweeb rock"—wasn't wrong.

Returning to her office, she passed Nancy Clayton, the head of viewer services, who was listening to a few of the hundred-plus messages that MTV's viewers leave each day:

> "Hello, MTV! When is your birthday?"
>
> "MTV is part of our family cable service, and the other night we watched five minutes of 'Beavis and Butt-head' and saw them deface a wall mural. 'Beavis and Butt-head' is only encouraging kids to commit these acts of vandalism. I need to spend additional money, get additional equipment to keep MTV off our television."
>
> "I think '120 Minutes' sucks."
>
> "Hi, MTV, I'm sixteen and I have to stay home all summer, and it's really boring and I just wanted say it's not fair that you have to be eighteen to be an intern at MTV, especially since your audience is teen-agers."

At 3 P.M., as McGrath was getting ready to go upstairs to see Freston, the words "MTV Premiere" came up on her muted TV. "MTV Premiere!" she said. It was "Love Is Strong," from "Voodoo Lounge," by the Stones. In the video, Mick and the Stones, giants of rock, stride around Manhattan with giant babes popping up everywhere. "It's not particularly original, but for what it is it works well, I think," McGrath said. Outside in the hallway, the music went up loud, and I walked out to see what was happening. An intern coming out of an office rocked out while passing another intern, and then went up and stood close to the television set, which was bolted to the wall above the warrens outside McGrath's office. "Hey, that chick's fat," he said, snapping into "Beavis and Butt-head" video-commentary mode. A giant babe's giant boobs were practically falling out of her dress. "That's an interesting dress," he said. Charlie Watts appeared, playing a drum set of water towers on a Manhattan rooftop. "Hey, this guy's as old as my grandfather!"

"He really said that?" McGrath asked in the elevator when I repeated what the intern had said about Watts. She was wearing vintage-clothing-store, Grace Slick-like attire—a shimmery rayon skirt, a blue blouse with big horn buttons, and leather sandals. In front of us in the elevator was a male demo kid wearing a T-shirt with so many holes in it that it was hard to imagine how he had put it on without pulling it apart. We got out at twenty-five and went into Freston's office. Freston was watching Stone Temple Pilots on MTV, muted, while listening to the new Bryan Ferry album. "Have you heard this album? It's great," Freston said. This was a coincidence, as I had been thinking that Freston would be played by Bryan Ferry in the music-video version of life at MTV. Freston is a handsome guy with a gleam in his eye who, like Bryan Ferry, makes you believe in the lasting possibilities of the rock-and-roll life.

Freston was one of the pioneers of MTV, which was started with fifteen million dollars from Warner Amex Satellite Entertainment when the late Steve Ross was the chairman of Warner Communications. MTV went on the air at 12:01 A.M., August 1, 1981, with a video by the Buggles called "Video Killed the Radio Star." The key visionaries were John Lack, who had the idea, and Bob Pittman, who managed the team they assembled, which included, among others, John Sykes, a.k.a. the Syko, who thought up the early gimmicks and stunts; Fred Seibert, who designed the look of MTV; and Carolyn Baker, who dealt with the talent. Freston was the marketing guy.

On other occasions, I sat with Freston in his office while he meditated on the arc of his career. "For a number of years after college, I worked for an advertising firm, and it was a job I grew to hate," he said. "Finally, it looked like I was going to be assigned to a toilet-paper account, so I said to my girlfriend at the time, 'I can't stand it,' and she said, 'Don't be a jerk. Quit, and meet up with me in Africa.' So we crossed the Sahara, and—well, the girlfriend lasted all of three weeks, but I kept travelling, and ended up in Asia and set about trying to make a living." Freston established a fabric-export business, and lived in Afghanistan and India for eight years. "You know, I never saw a TV while I was in India. Now, ironically, I'm going back to India with MTV. I came back to the States in my early thirties and had a what-do-I-do-now type of crisis. My main hobby and love in life had been music—jazz and rock—so I wanted to get a job in music, and one day I picked up a *Billboard* and saw that a man named John Lack had an idea to start a music-video channel. He was looking to hire about sixty people, and one prerequisite for the job seemed to be that you had no previous experience in television. So I called him and convinced him that I was an entrepreneur, and I got the job. I worked for Bob Pittman. And I can't believe it's been over fourteen years."

In the early days, almost everything about MTV was revolutionary. "Some of our best ideas came out of jokes," Bob Pittman, now the president and C.E.O. of Time Warner Enterprises, recalled recently. "All my friends were in this with me, and we hung out together—Sykes and I shared a summer house. There was lots of sitting around at dinner, and someone would say, 'Ha-ha-ha, we should do this,' and then someone else would say, 'Hey, maybe we could.' Like, 'Hey, let's give away a house. Let's get John Cougar Mellencamp to paint the house pink!' Every idea was O.K. Steve Ross had a wonderful philosophy—that people get fired for not making mistakes. The other thing was we had no money. Like with our logo spots. At the time, the networks' logo stuff was very George Lucas—these big chrome hunks of metal flying in from outer space with the name of your product on it. Well, you know the original MTV promo, with the astronaut planting the MTV flag on the moon? Cost almost nothing to make. We got the footage from NASA—it was free."

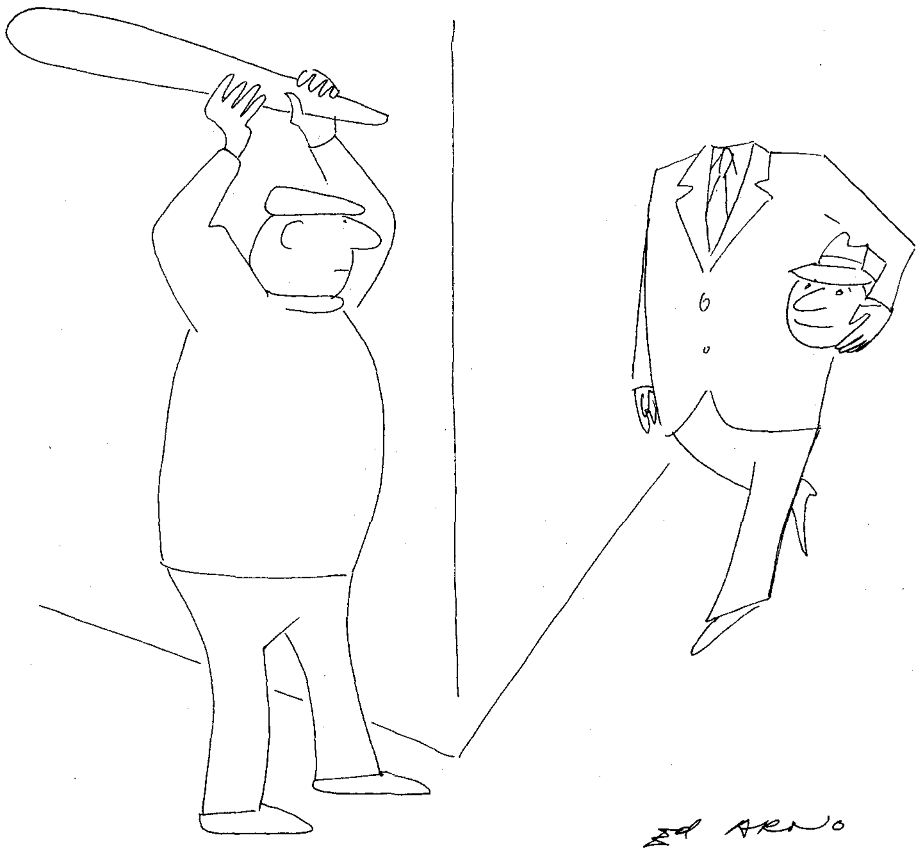
In 1985, Pittman and David Horowitz, who was C.E.O. of MTV, led a leveraged-buyout attempt to take MTV private, supported by a group including Freston, but Ross ended up accepting a higher bid—of which three hundred and thirty-five million dollars went for MTV, VH-1, and Nickelodeon—from Viacom. A year and a half later, the Viacom management people tried their own L.B.O., and Sumner Redstone outbid *them*, paying $3.4 billion for the company. "That was a bad time," Freston told me. "The Viacom people found some of the stuff that went on at MTV aberrant. Morale was low. Also, there was the feeling that MTV had seen its day. I was ready to leave myself, but then Sumner bought Viacom and called me in, and I met him, and he was the classic eccentric billionaire—you know, with the shaving cream behind his ear—and he said he'd let us do it our own way. And it's been amazing. He brought Frank in, and they've never questioned anything we've done. We got forty million dollars to develop three animated series, including 'The Ren & Stimpy Show' "—named for a couple of degenerate cartoon characters who appear on Nickelodeon. "We've got eighty million to build our Asia network. I remember going to Frank and Sumner with the 'Beavis and Butt-head' idea and saying, 'If we have any luck at all, these guys are going to be culture icons.' They laughed and shook their heads, but they supported us.

"Staying with MTV has been a fantastic ride. We have built this into almost a billion-dollar business, which has been satisfying and amusing. And in some ways we're just getting going. Now we're about to come out with 'Joe's Apartment,' our first feature film; we're getting into home video; we're building the Asia network; and we're launching VH-1 in England right now. For me, this is very exciting. Sometimes I think I have the world's most fun job. But I have no idea what I'm going to be doing in five years. When I meet my contemporaries from college, I find I have more in common with their kids. I guess I have arrested-development syndrome, which is a good thing for someone to have here."

For one of our meetings, on a Monday morning, Freston was late. He had come in from Quogue, where he had spent the weekend listening to early Stones albums and hanging out with his two sons, who are ten and five (he and his wife separated last year), and then he had stopped at home—he is moving into the top floor of a newly renovated building in Tribeca—because he needed a suit and tie for a Viacom meeting that afternoon. Coming up in the elevator that morning, someone had called him Mr. Freston. "That scares me," Freston said. "You're talking about my father when you call me that."

For his meeting with McGrath, Freston was not wearing a tie. They were joined by Sara Levinson, a president on the business side, who was about to leave the company to become president of N.F.L. Properties. McGrath, in her new role, was absorbing Levinson's job—a major increase in power.

Freston sat down facing the TV, with a large cutout of Beavis and Butt-head to his left, and a large cutout of Ren and Stimpy to his right. Freston looked like a nutty Walt Disney. McGrath sat on his left, and Levinson sat between the TV and McGrath. Reading from notes, Levinson gave her final report on MTV's projects around the world, for which McGrath would be taking responsibility. Levinson said that a daily two-and-a-half-hour block of music programming made by MTV would start running, in Hindi and English, on DD2 Metro Channel, in India. A similar block, of Mandarin-language programming, would appear in China sometime soon. By the end of the year, MTV Asia, a new network, would deliver local programming to eighteen countries in Asia, on the Abstar I satellite. It will compete with Channel V, which originates in Hong Kong and is owned and distributed by Rupert Murdoch's Star TV network. This new expansion could eventually increase the number of households with MTV from two hundred and fifty million (nearly twice as many as CNN) to more than five hundred million.



"We've started auditioning Hindi and Chinese v.j.s," Levinson said, looking up from her notes. "I hear the Hindi v.j. is hunky."

"He's adorable," McGrath said.

Levinson ran through the state of MTV Japan, MTV Europe, MTV Latino, and MTV Brazil, where there were problems getting satellite space.

"Well, Brazil represents ten million homes, and we want to get in there," Freston said. "You know, cable is going to be forever."

"Can we quote you on that?" McGrath said.

"Hey, there's the Woodstock van," Freston said, pointing at MTV. "I'm going to spend a night in that." Everyone talked about Woodstock for a while. Then Freston turned to Levinson. "So that covers it?"

"Pretty much," Levinson said. "Oh, Australia."

She said that Australia might have to settle for American or European programming—MTV beamed in, and not original programming.

"I don't think we want to do that in Australia," Freston said. "Australia is a very media-savvy country, and we don't want to look ridiculous."

Getting up, Levinson said she had to get back to her office to call to check on her son, who had an ear infection.

"So you're leaving as of one-thirty on Friday," Freston said. "That's it."

"That's it," Levinson said, looking down.

McGrath was fidgety, turning her body from side to side in a girlish way. "I can't believe it," she said.

"Well," Freston said ironically, "change is good."

"Change is good," McGrath repeated glumly.

The three of them stood somewhat awkwardly in the doorway of Freston's office. On Freston's secretary's desk was a small basket of flowers. Freston picked it up and looked at the card. "It's from Coolio," he said. Coolio, a rap singer, is a current MTV star. He held the basket out to Levinson. "Sara, I want you to have these, as a sign of our appreciation."

IN Frank Biondi's office, the television faces away from the sitting area, toward him, and therefore the Oliver Stonesque rock-and-roll media experience that is part of conversation up to and including Freston's level at MTV is gone. Biondi's office is very large and is situated on the western end of the building, which the Viacom people feel is the power end, because it has the empire-builder view—west across the Hudson and toward the Hudson River Valley. Up here on the twenty-eighth floor, in the fine, thin air of media planning, all the tacky merchandising stuff has fallen away, and the pictures in the offices are not of Axl Rose and Madonna but of family and political leaders. Pictures of Biondi's two teen-age daughters are on a small table next to his couch. I asked whether they watched much MTV, and Biondi said that the younger one did, quite a bit. "I have always felt that if you spend time with your kids, and make an effort to explain to them what they are seeing, there is no problem," he told me. "With a few exceptions, I find MTV to be fairly benign. I can understand some people saying, 'Holy mackerel, this is going to ruin the fabric of our civilization,' but I don't come from that place. Tom used to joke that if we're not getting kicked out of at least one cable controller a month we're not doing our job."

Biondi is a forty-nine-year-old Princeton graduate who got into the cable business in its infancy and eventually became the chairman and C.E.O. of HBO. When Redstone bought Viacom, he brought Biondi in to run it, promising Biondi that he wouldn't interfere. Biondi is one of the few people on the cable side of the information highway whom the people on the computer side respect. In Biondi's long-range view, Viacom will be the natural competitor of Microsoft when the TV and the computer become the same machine. A year ago, the Viacom strategy was to create a shopping channel that would sell MTV merchandise to people in the demo, and to split MTV into genre-specific channels—possibly MTV Rap, MTV Metal, and MTV Soft—in order to cope with the increasing fragmentation of popular music. But the government recently reregulated the cable industry, making it harder for cable companies to pass on to the consumer the cost of building a five-hundred-channel system. Now Biondi thinks the five hundred channels are years away.

"If you look at the long future of MTV, you see a full-service network," Biondi explained to me. "If you want to buy the CD or a seat at the concert, if you want to know more about an artist, or get a printout of the lyrics, or watch a rockumentary, or if you want to see some of the Rolling Stones movies—say you're nine, and you can't figure out how these fifty-year-old guys got here—you'll be able to order 'Gimme Shelter.' There will be MTV movies, MTV products. Why not? You see Disney going into the cruise business. Maybe there will be MTV cruises and MTV special events. MTV's mission is connecting to the audience, to the MTV Generation, which we didn't even name—your side did—but which has become like Kleenex or Xerox. We want to provide a point of view for the MTV Generation. Why do you read the *Times* when you can get almost all the same information on-line? Because you want a point of view, a sensibility. That is what we are selling."

JUST down the hall from Biondi is the überboss of the youth machine—Sumner Redstone, the seventy-one-year-old chairman of Viacom, who has said that buying MTV made him feel fifteen years younger. A favorite fact of people who are cynical about MTV's claim to being the voice of the revolution is that almost all the money that MTV Networks earns—about three hundred and forty million this year—goes toward paying off Sumner Redstone's debts. Redstone made his fortune—which has been reported as high as $5.6 billion—mostly in movie theatres. (The multiplex concept is a key Redstone innovation.) Last winter, he was the winner of an expensive bidding war with Barry Diller for Paramount Communications, Inc., which he acquired for just under ten billion dollars—a deal that put more commercial pressure than ever on MTV.

Redstone still owns a modest home in Newton, Massachusetts, where he has lived on and off for thirty-six years. Most of the time, he lives at a hotel on the Upper East Side. He spends early mornings in his suite, looking over the previous night's receipts from his eight hundred and fifty movie theatres—an old habit. He sometimes walks through the Park to work, and arrives at the Viacom Building between seven-thirty and nine-thirty. On the morning we met, Redstone looked happy. He pointed out that the movie "Forrest Gump," owned by his newly acquired studio, was No. 1 at the box office. He said he had been watching a good bit of Nickelodeon because of his five grandchildren, all of whom are in the Nick demo now (ages two to fourteen); they will be moving through the MTV demo soon, and then through the VH-1 demo (twenty-five to forty), and into the Showtime demo (up to forty-nine). All these channels are owned by Redstone. I asked him if he watched much MTV, and he said that he did not: "My demo is more like Benny Goodman and Tony Bennett." He did attend the recent 1994 Video Music Awards, and was appalled to see Kennedy, one of the v.j.s, who likes to go on about her devotion to Republicans, tongue her microphone while Mayor Giuliani was talking. The following day, Redstone called Freston in outrage. (When I asked Freston about this, he put on his most mature expression and said, "I think it is highly inappropriate. The Mayor of New York goes out of his way to welcome the Video Music Awards back to New York, and Kennedy fellates the microphone. Being on the leading edge is one thing, but fellating the mike while interviewing the Mayor—I don't see what envelope that is pushing.")

In 1979, there was a fire at the Copley Plaza Hotel, in Boston, where Redstone was staying at the time. Redstone had to hang by one hand from a ledge outside his room for ten minutes until he could be rescued by a ladder. He was badly burned, and his right hand doesn't feel like a hand when you shake it. (He has a special tennis racquet, which he wraps around his right hand, and is considered a fierce competitor.) In the years that followed the fire, people who know him say, Redstone has pursued his business affairs with the single-mindedness and the zest of a man who has been given two chances to live. Freston told me a story about going to a Knicks game with Redstone shortly after his purchase of Paramount—which brought with it the Knicks, the Rangers, and Madison Square Garden. Redstone, who is not a sports fan, had never been inside the Garden before. "Gee, this place is great!"

OLD WALLS

When the year has turned on its mountain as the summer
stars begin to grow faint and the wren wakes into
singing I am waiting among the loosening stones
of the enclosure beyond the lower door of the far barn
the green stitchwort shines in the new light as though it were
still spring and no footprint leads through it any longer
the one apple tree has not grown much in its corner
the ivy has taken over the east wall toward the oak woods
and crept into the bird cherry here I listened
to the clack of the old man's hoe hilling the potatoes
in his dry field below the ash trees and here I looked up
into the quince flowers opening above the wall
and I wanted to be far away like the surface
of a river I knew and here I watched the autumn light
and thought this was where I might choose to be buried
here I struggled in the web and went on weaving it
with every turn and here I went on yielding
too much credit to an alien claim and here I came
to myself in a winter fog with ice on the stones
and I went out through the gap in the wall and it was done
and here I thought I saw myself as I had once been
and I was certain that I was free of an old chain.

—W. S. MERWIN

he kept saying. It was a playoff game, and John Starks was having an off night. "Fire that man!" Redstone said. (He has since sold off his sports assets to Cablevision Systems and I.T.T.)

Many people advised Redstone against buying MTV, arguing that its day was over, but MTV's ratings have picked up in the nineties, and now it is making more money than ever. It has nimbly skipped from Culture Club to Van Halen to Michael Jackson to Madonna to Kurt Cobain to Snoop Doggy Dogg. It jumped on rap before any of the mainstream radio stations began to play it (most still don't), and has thrived in a climate in which popular music continues to split up into smaller parts. MTV is like what Top Forty radio used to be. It has a popular live-music series, "MTV Unplugged"; an action-adventure series, "Dead at 21," which is about a young man in the demo who has a computer chip implanted in his head and has to have it deactivated before he turns twenty-one; a drama series, "The Real World," starring real-life demo kids, now in its third season and more popular than ever; a fashion showcase, "House of Style," hosted by Cindy Crawford; and, of course, it has "Beavis and Butt-head."

"People said when I bought MTV that it was a fad," Redstone told me. "Now we're in two hundred and fifty million homes. The only place we aren't is Antarctica, because there aren't enough Eskimos who want to watch us, and South Africa, where we hope to be next year. What we have found, you see, is that kids on the streets in Tokyo have more in common with kids on the streets in London than they do with their parents. We're catching these kids at a stage in life when all kids are essentially the same, when they virtually *have* to rebel from their parents. By the way, this is also why freedom fighters all over the world associate themselves with MTV. In Eastern European countries during the collapses of the Communist regimes, we were getting calls from governments offering to give us a terrestrial channel, because MTV was such a symbol of freedom, of cool (well, governments don't say cool), of being progressive. You know, I have a picture—Hilary, could you bring that picture over?"

Redstone directed the corporate-relations person who was sitting with us toward the window area, where there was a picture of two East German soldiers sitting on the Berlin Wall holding an umbrella that said MTV on it. Hilary brought the picture over and handed it to Redstone, and he handed it to me. "There," he said. I looked at the picture, passed it to Redstone, and he passed it to Hilary to put back. "We began broadcasting over there the day before the Wall fell," he said, "and I used to kid that we were the reason it happened."

"Excuse me, is this a piece of the Wall?" Hilary asked from the window, holding up a chunk of concrete.

Redstone looked over toward her and seemed bewildered for a moment. Then he said, "Yes. Yes, I think it is."

About a year ago, I entered a confusing period in my life, when I started listening to new bands with an enthusiasm I had never had before—not even when I myself was in the demo. I grew a freaky beard, shaved it, and then stopped cutting my hair. When my hair got down around my eyes, I started listening to Snoop Doggy Dogg somewhat obsessively, riding the subway to work with my Discman on, completely into the "dee-oh-double-gee," thinking to myself, Man, you are cool, you are sitting on the subway and none of these people are going to fuck with you and if they do fuck with you you are going to fuck them up. *What's my muthafuckin name?* It did occur to me sometimes that I was not a twenty-two-year-old black man walking around South Central L.A., not a gangsta with my gat in my pocket and only my homeys to watch my back, but a comfortable thirty-five-year-old white man on his way to his office in midtown Manhattan. Most of the time, though, I didn't think about who I was—I was just digging the murderous styles and poetical techniques of Snoop.

When I was in the demo, I thought that thirty-five was middle-aged—I thought of my father as middle-aged at thirty-five—but now that I was thirty-five I felt young in a relaxed way that I didn't at twenty-four, when I was consumed with worry about how my life was going to turn out. But was this youthful feeling real? Or was it an illusion, created by media in general and MTV in particular? Magazines tell you what it is like to be young, but watching MTV actually makes you *feel* young, even if you are not; the promise woven into many of MTV's image promos is that you can stay young by watching it. Before MTV, you had to go to clubs or rock concerts to know how hip young people were dressing and thinking and acting. But now, thanks to MTV, you can know the code words the gangsta rappers use for cop killing without ever having been to a rap concert, let alone on the streets of South Central L.A.

Judy McGrath told me about a four-hour compilation of Nirvana footage that she had had made for herself, because she thought Kurt's death was the saddest thing in the world. It contained all of Nirvana's videos, the "Unplugged" concert, an interview with Kurt in a yellow satin ball gown, and Nirvana's acceptance speech at the 1993 MTV Video Music Awards, when Kurt grinningly displayed his unbuttoned fly onstage. When she offered me a copy of this videotape, I shamelessly accepted it and even reminded her about it when she seemed to forget, and then sat at home watching it over and over again.

During this period, I was also watching lots of MTV—more even than McGrath would approve of. MTV is probably best watched as a mood modulator. If you're up, it brings you down, and if you're way down it brings you up. Because MTV's programming is designed with the technology of the remote control in mind, there is a great deal of repetition. To me the images seemed to flow in concentric circles. There was a tight loop of attractive body parts, which worked out to something like a breast, a biceps, or a buttcheek every fifteen seconds; then a fifteen-minute loop of black guys moving through dark, forbidding-looking urban dwellings, long-haired white guys soaring across cornfields, hot-looking black girl singers, troubled-looking white girl singers, and heavy-metal guys in amazing displays of manliness, all jumbled together with a speed made famous by MTV; and, finally, a three-hour loop during which the videos currently in heavy rotation were played and then started coming around again. After a day or so of watching, the repetition became monumental, and I felt the boredom sink into my skull until it was difficult to tell my consciousness and the television apart. Maybe this is where the secret path to nirvana lies—the nirvana that people who watch a lot of MTV say is possible to achieve, but I never really found it. I did manage to flatten my perceptions in a way that left me feeling cool, but not cool in the sense of hip—more like cool in the way you might feel with saline solution dripping into your arm.

"What is haaappening?" my wife, Lisa, asked nervously when she came home late one evening and found me sitting in the dark watching "Beavis and Butt-head." I explained that "Beavis and Butt-head" was like "The Simpsons" but darker, and that the really compelling thing about the show was the relationship between the two boys: Beavis is so strange that only Butt-head—who is even more of a loser than Beavis is—will hang out with him, and treating Beavis like shit is the price that Butt-head extracts for taking care of him.

"And it's funny," I said.

"Uhhhh, I got to take a dump," Butt-head said.

"*That's* funny?" Lisa asked.

"Well, it *is* sort of funny."

One day, I rode out to the MTV Beach House with Andy Schuon, who is the head of music and programming. Insofar as any one person is responsible for the video-to-video flow of images on MTV, it is Schuon, and this is interesting, because Schuon was originally a radio guy. He was a boy-wonder d.j., who started working in Reno when he was fifteen, and moved quickly to different radio stations around the country. He skipped college and ended up as the program director of KROQ, a big L.A. rock station, when he was twenty-five. MTV recruited Schuon two and a half years ago to help rejuvenate its image, and Schuon has moved MTV strongly into alternative music, which is now its mainstay.

Schuon is a fast-food junkie—for his thirtieth-birthday party in the office recently, his colleagues fêted him with Quarter Pounders, cold French fries, chocolate shakes, and pizza—and from time to time while we were sitting in traffic on the Long Island Expressway he would say he couldn't wait to stop at the 7-Eleven at Exit 70 for a Super Big Gulp, which is 7-Eleven's massive (forty-four-ounce) container of soda. "You got to love it—a Big Gulp," he said. I sensed that somewhere in Andy

SEATING UPSTAIRS

"I'm driven, but I'm wounded as well."

Schuon's exact relationship to a Big Gulp lay an important insight into MTV and its role in American culture, but I never quite grasped it.

The Beach House was one of Schuon's ideas. It is a good example of what MTV does very well, which is inexpensively packaging the music videos in a way that gives them a theme and a flow, and brands them with the MTV image. The Beach House was, Schuon explained, a way of "making MTV feel like summer." He described it as "a destination resort for the mind." The Beach House is in fact a real house, and most of the v.j. segments that string together the videos in the summer are shot there. To the MTV viewer, the Beach House is a gingerbread house made out of eye candy—a non-stop party with the coolest people on the planet.

Riding in Schuon's Infiniti, I was reflecting on the theme that seemed to run through all my MTV experience—the ironic confusion of real life and television life, and wondering to what extent I was a victim of it myself. In MTV's popular series "The Real World," recent college graduates are selected by the producers, moved into a cool house or loft in a cool city (New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and, next season, London), manipulated by the producers to various degrees, and then their "lives" are filmed and edited into drama. The MTV Beach House is "The Real World" in reverse: a television set is made to appear like a real house, and the v.j.s who hang out there engage sarcastically in real-life activities—eating dinner, sleeping, falling in love, sitting on the toilet. Sometimes the v.j.s pretend to be people on "The Real World." No one actually lives in the Beach House; the crew was living for the summer in a motel down the road.

I asked Schuon whether he worried about getting older.

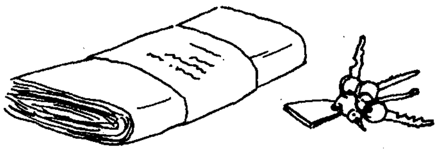
"No way," he said. "Hang around MTV all day, go to concerts, listen to new music, go to Roseland—you'll never grow old. You won't."

The sun was going down when we arrived at the Beach House, a nice shingled house on the beach in eastern Long Island which MTV had rented for the season. A crew of about fifteen demo kids was busy setting up for an evening performance by Babyface, an R. & B. singer-songwriter. They were supervised by Lauren Levine, the head producer of the Beach House, who is British, and who told me that they were all completely "fagged" because they had been up until three in the morning the night before, "just raging" with two of the New York Rangers, who had dropped by the house—*with* the Stanley Cup—for the weekend. Earlier that afternoon, as on most afternoons, there had been a group of real-life demo kids hanging out around the pool, serving as extras in the v.j. segments. Lauren said, "Some of these kids we had this afternoon were so beautiful it took your breath away." She put her hand over her heart and looked at me wide-eyed.

A young woman was sitting in the lifeguard chair at the MTV Beach House pool, lettering cue cards for Bill Bellamy, a v.j., who was shooting segments with Babyface. A large off-duty cameraman went down the Action Park MTV Beach House water slide, head first, and made a tremendous splash. Kennedy was upstairs, dressed in pajamas and lying in bed with the model Veronica Webb, shooting spots for Alternative Nation, MTV's midnight-to-one block of video programming. Three young women were on phones upstairs recruiting a group of kids for that evening's Babyface performance. They were working with annotated lists ("cute guy," "sexy," etc.) of the names and numbers of kids who had been at the Beach House before. I asked one of the women, Lisi Gottleib, how they had found the kids in the first place, and she said, "Well, we found a bunch of them right out here on Montauk Highway. There was a car accident, and a bunch of kids were standing around, so we went out and said, 'Hey, do you want to come to the Beach House?' "

From the upstairs terrace, I could see the demo kids massing out on the road. Security personnel led them, in batches, past the Beach House and down the steps to the beach. Two girls slipped out of the line and got into the Beach House itself. Lauren intercepted them.

"Bill told me it would be cool if we just came over and hung out," one of the girls said.



"This is a television set," said Lauren. "You can't just hang out."

Once all the kids were seated on the beach, the producers began walking back and forth, looking them over. The most attractive-looking kids were chosen for the prime seats, around Babyface, where the camera would most often take them in, and the less attractive kids were placed farther back. Now Lisi Gottleib had a bullhorn, and she was saying, "O.K., we're sorry if you get separated from your friends." She explained that MTV was making a video out of Babyface's performance, and that, to save money, they were shooting with only one camera. Therefore, they were going to film Babyface singing the same song five or six times, and, for the sake of continuity, the kids had to stay put. "Once you're in your seats, please don't move," Gottleib said. "You can*not* go to the bathroom." The kids sat in a tight circle on the beach, obediently submitting to this directive, in the service of MTV's youthful ideals.

Kennedy came down the stairs and took a pratfall into the sand, then stood with her back to the kids. Whispers of "Kennedy!" were heard. Two teen-age girls got up and came over to where Kennedy was talking to a crew member, and one took a lock of Kennedy's long dark hair and held it. Kennedy noticed the girls but didn't acknowledge them. Suddenly, she whipped around and gave them a big, fake-ironic smile, said "Hi!" sarcastically, and turned her back on them again.

I retreated up the steps and found Lauren, who was looking back at the Beach House, which would be in the background of some of the shots. "Isn't it lovely?" she said, pointing to the way the pool lights were playing off the side of the house. "I see that and I think, 'Deep Thoughts by Jack Handy.' "

Andy Schuon came up the steps from the beach.

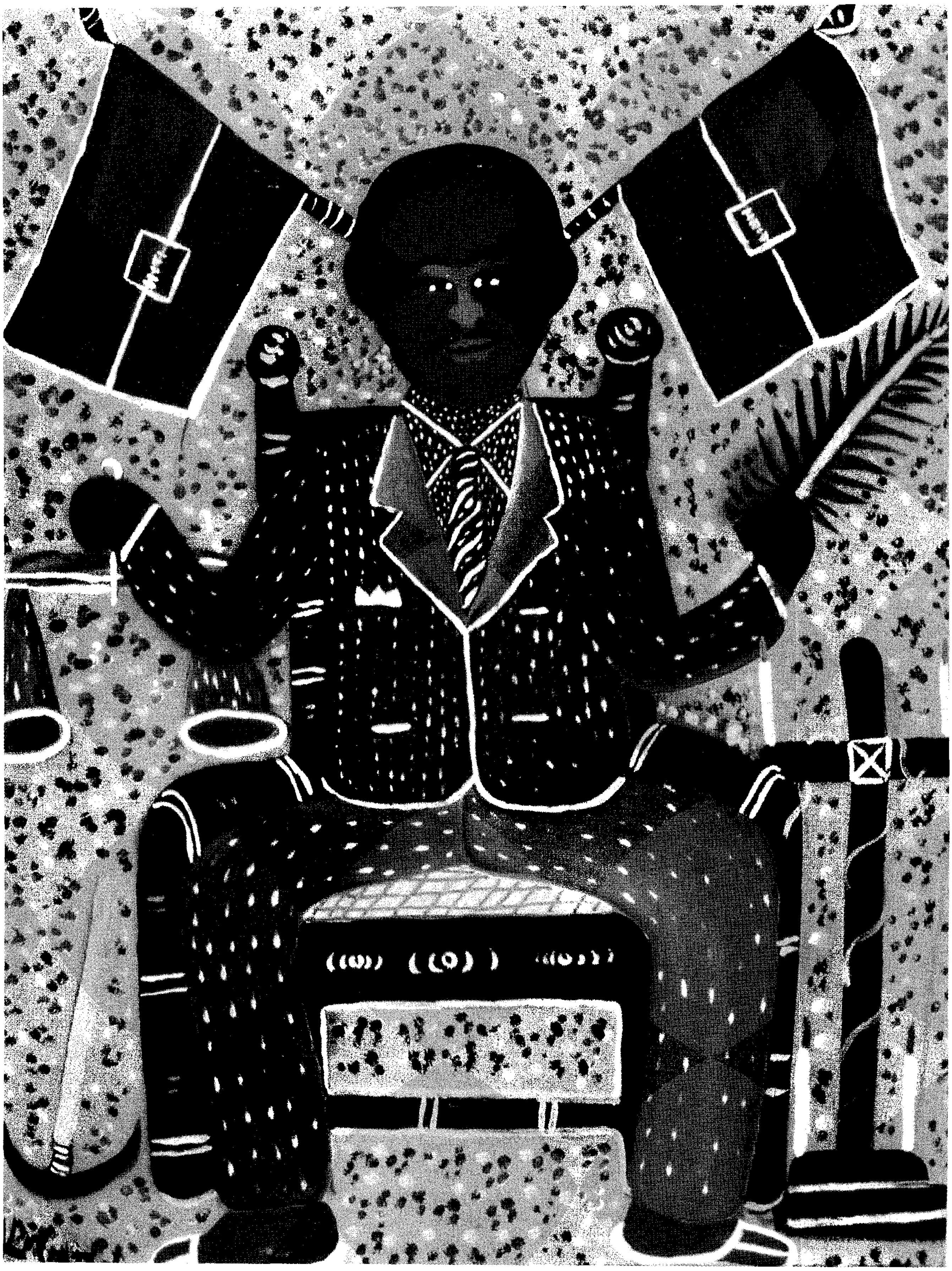
I said, "Hey, I'm ready to go if you are."

"You're not going to stay for the performance?" Lauren asked, sounding hurt.

I apologized. The culling of the cute kids from the non-cute had brought back bad memories of what it is really like to be in the demo, and I was depressed.

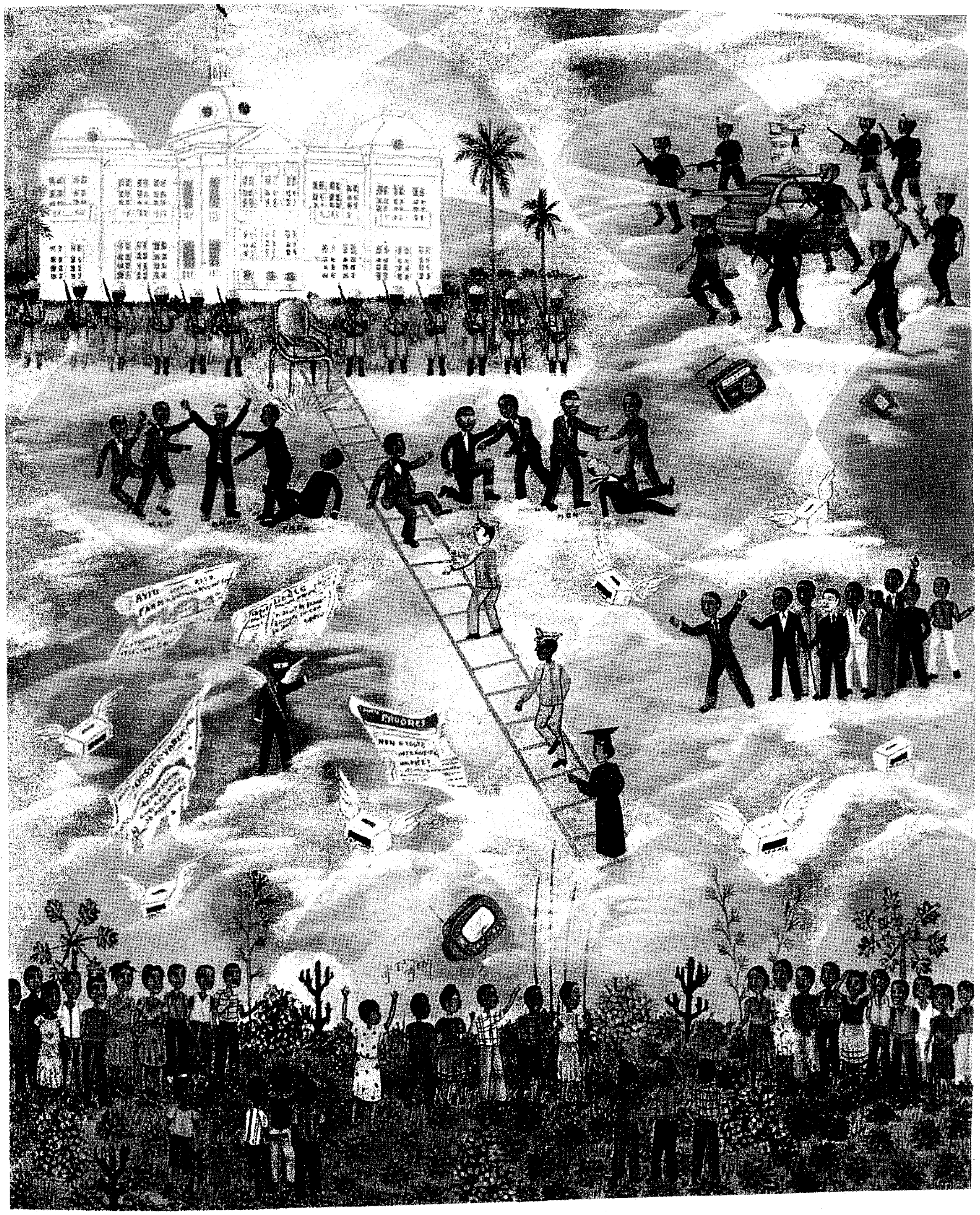
"I'll watch it on MTV," I said. ♦

HAITIAN HISTORY IN HAITIAN PICTURES



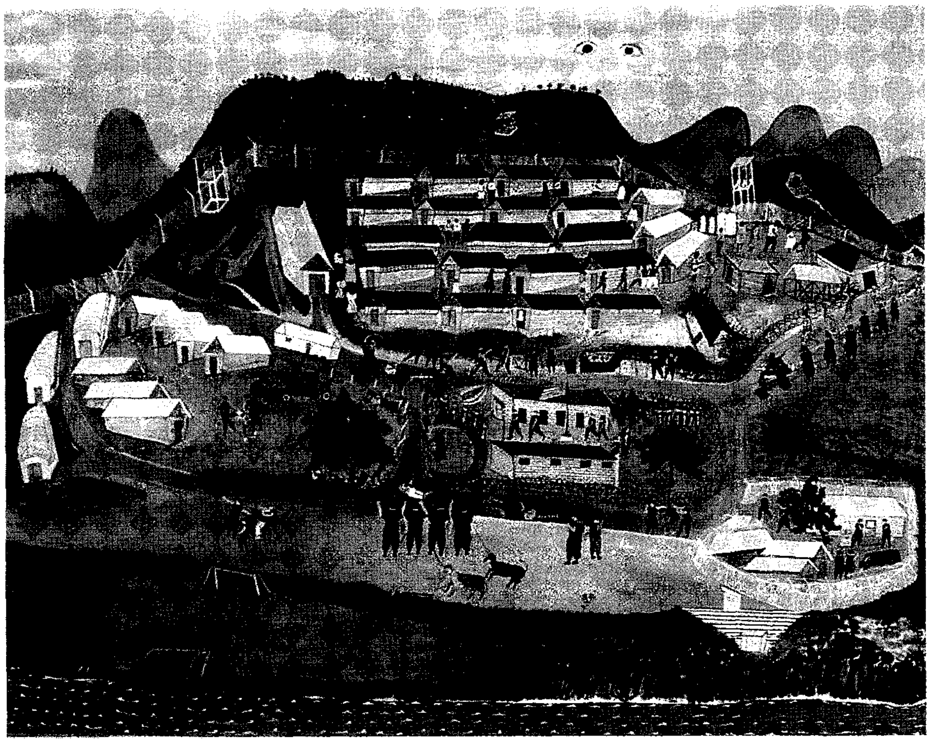
FORTUNÉ GÉRARD, 1991. COURTESY COLLECTION AFRIQUE EN CRÉATIONS FROM THE EXHIBIT "AN ENCOUNTER BETWEEN TWO WORLDS AS SEEN BY HAITI'S ARTISTS."

DECEMBER, 1990 *Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a thirty-seven-year-old priest and hero of the slums, is elected President of Haiti. In Fortuné Gérard's painting, Aristide sits in the Presidential chair, flanked by symbols of labor, justice, and religion.*



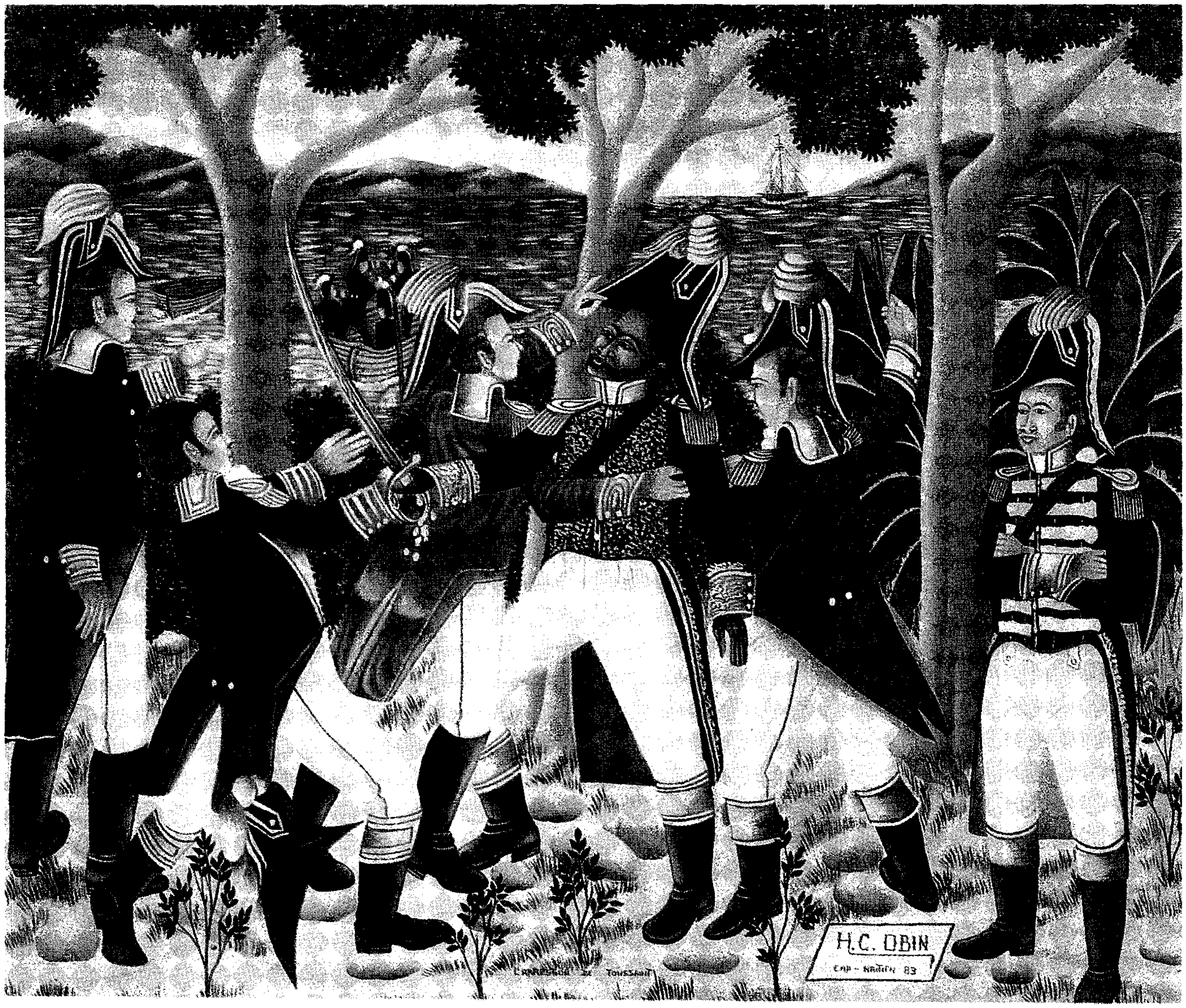
JEAN-BAPTISTE JEAN, 1991. FROM "AN ENCOUNTER..."

SEPTEMBER, 1991 *Aristide is overthrown and flees the country. In Jean-Baptiste Jean's allegorical painting, Titid, as the President's followers lovingly call him in Creole, sprouts wings and floats in Heaven; so do the ballot boxes that elected him. Newspaper headlines decry the coup and report on repression in provincial towns. A light-skinned commander advances on the Presidential Palace in a fire-spitting tank; in front of the Palace, members of the political and military élite squabble over power.*



1992 *In St.-Marc, Haiti, Colin Anisser was an electrician. Two years ago, hoping to make his way to Florida, he boarded a rickety boat. Picked up by the Coast Guard, he was placed in a crowded detention camp for H.I.V.-positive refugees, in Guantánamo, Cuba, and later painted this picture of it. Anisser and his fellow camp inmates greeted President Clinton's election with joy; Clinton, after all, had promised to let Haitian boat people into the United States.*

1802-1994 *If Operation Uphold Democracy eventually turns sour, supporters of Aristide may see it as another foreign betrayal of one of their national heroes—like the arrest of Toussaint Louverture by the French in 1802, shown in Henri-Claude Obin's painting.* —ANNA HUSARSKA

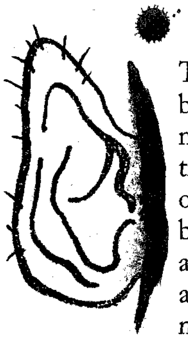


(TOP) COLIN ANISSER, 1994. COURTESY CAVIN-MORRIS GALLERY; (BOTTOM) HENRI-CLAUDE OBIN, 1983. FROM "AN ENCOUNTER..."

FICTION

BUSH PIGS

BY RICHARD DOOLING



IT'S not easy coming back to this country. It's not like any other country in the world. Most of you don't know that, because you live here, and you've never been anywhere else, except maybe the Caribbean, which is like a big beach, or Europe, which is like going to an old museum. Europeans sit at tables with knives and forks. They have beds and sheets, toilets and garbage cans. Africa is different. The expatriates there will tell you that the reverse culture shock of coming back to America can be worse than the shock of going Third World in the first place.

For three years I was in the Peace Corps, and I lived in a village in the south of Sierra Leone, West Africa. I'd like to say that I stayed so long because the villagers needed me, but that would be a lie. I owed a lot on my college loans, I heard that jobs back home were scarce, I didn't want to go to law school, a certain village girl prepared my meals for me and took care of me in other ways, and for a long time a couple of diamond diggers and I were smoking the very best Nigerian jamba every night and listening to Bob Marley and Lucky Dube, King Sunny Adé and Johnny Clegg Savuka. Time passed. I used to drink with a white missionary at Sulima Beach—twenty minutes by footpath and the most beautiful place in the world. One night we laughed over beers about how a local witch-finder had put a swear on him. Four days later his body washed up on the beach in front of the thatched *baffa* where we had watched the sun set.

The U.S. government sent me to Sierra Leone to help starving Africans, but at least half the time, the starving Africans took care of me. For every week I was able to hobble out of my hut, I spent two more curled up on a tick mattress with dysentery or malaria. When the fever was upon me, soothsayers called "looking-around men" came and washed their eyes with lotions made from magic leaves; then they threw stones on a mat and told my fortune. The prognosis was always bad, the cures and propitiatory sacrifices were always expensive.

There was no protein anywhere, only rotten vegetable matter. It was hard to keep weight on—even American money couldn't buy better food. I had wounds, simple nicks or mosquito bites, that became suppurating tropical sores. The Peace Corps provided a manual called "Where There Is No Doctor," and it said that my wounds were not healing because the body needs protein to make new cells and repair itself. Oh.

The war in Liberia, to the south, started spilling over into Sierra Leone. Food became even scarcer. The rice farms went untended because people were afraid to go out in the bush. The villagers were dropping concentrated insecticides into ponds and eating the fish that bobbed to the surface. Even bananas were scarce, and the ones that the groundnut girls sold to me were stiff and green. When I ate them, they came back up, and all the water I had boiled that morning went out the other end.

Fevers came, and nightmares that I woke up and lived in. I suppose I should have left, but I was too sick to travel. Instead, I sat in my hut and listened to tales of witchcraft and bad medicine, told to the villagers by refugees streaming in from Liberia. All along the border, the forests were teeming with bush devils and Liberian warriors, cannibals who made something called Liberian stew out of slaughtered women and children and ate it before going into battle. They made medicines from the flesh of human beings, and these medicines gave them so much power that they could not be killed in battle; bullets bounced off them. They could change themselves into elephants, leopards, baboons.

This "shape-shifting," as it is called in Africa, is very common. The villagers all believed this was absolutely true: that certain human beings could change themselves into animals at will. All over Sierra Leone, hunters quickly cut the ears off the animals they killed for just this reason. If a hunter killed a witch or a sorcerer travelling in the shape of an animal, the animal would change back into its human shape, and the hunter would be accused of murder—unless he had the animal's ears to prove his innocence.

I dwell on this only because the animal stuff becomes important later on, and I think I was ambushed from the inside. I had forgotten that the American unconscious is inside. In Africa, it's outside the body, in the bush. Supernatural spirits roam in both places, take on the shapes of men or animals, and go on killing rampages. Human blood gives these devils great pleasure. Does it matter that the American spirits appear inside the mind of a guy who likes to plan the day his spree of violence will be covered on the six-o'clock news, whereas the African ones come rampaging in from the bush? One way or another, they show up, and I was ready only for the outside kind.

The civil war got worse, and hordes of fleeing Liberians streamed through our village. Breathing skeletons in rags putting one foot in front of the other, children carrying other children. Some of them gave up and collapsed in the clearings of our village. I saw a beggar dying on a mat. Flies were swarming in his eyes, crawling in and out of his bleeding sockets, and he was still alive, and holding out his hands to me.

The villagers had long and earnest discussions about leaving their homes and the land their ancestors had farmed for centuries. They were desperate for news that soldiers, any soldiers, were coming to restore order, so the families could go back to their farms. The more educated people among them prayed that *poo-muis*—white people, Europeans or Americans—would hear of their plight and send soldiers and doctors and healthy relief workers to help, as had happened in Ethiopia and Somalia.

FILIP PAGOWSKI

One night there was great excitement in the village because travellers in from Freetown had heard that an American film crew had arrived in West Africa. Now there was hope. Maybe the film crew would make movies of the slaughter in Liberia. Maybe they would make movies about starving people. Maybe, after the pictures were sent back, the U.S. Marines would come. Maybe food and medicine would come. But a week later we learned that the American film crew was making a movie about female circumcision. People in America did not want to see starving people or slaughtered Liberians. The people in America wanted to see pictures of the women's secret-society initiations.

Finally the Peace Corps program director came with a Land Rover and stuffed me in the back. He tried not to be nervous about being out in my part of the bush. I gave away my food and most of my stuff to the villagers. I gave my books to an old ma who sold food on the highway; in better days, she had used book pages to wrap five-cent orders of groundnuts. I tried to give a half bag of rice and a tin of palm oil to two skeletal kids, but they were too weak to lift either one.

Before I left, I told everyone to get out, because the Liberian rebels were going to burn all the villages in the southeast and seize the diamond pits. The villagers said they were staying. There was new hope: five white nuns had been killed in Liberia—maybe now American soldiers would come.

The American doctor in Freetown told me my blood work and my stool specimen would get me free medical care back in the States, because I was full of bugs the infectious-disease people paid tuition to see. I was medivacked out of Freetown and flown home for the first time in three years.

When I got off the plane in Omaha, my family and a few friends met me at the airport. I watched the excitement evaporate from their faces when they saw how much weight I had lost, how malaria had drained the color from my face. The lights made me blink and sweat. Metal and glass glared at me from everywhere and lit the pained expressions of people who wanted me to be three years and a few diseases younger.

"We were so worried about you!" they said.

"I was cleaning the refrigerator when I heard you couldn't get out," said my mom. Her face was caked with something, and there was paint around her eyes. Her hair was all stuck together and heaped on top of itself in weird, stiff swirls, frozen in time like sculpture. "The phone rang and the State Department people said you were being held hostage in Sierra Leone," she continued. "I was so worried!"

"I was trying to finish my thesis," said my brother. "Mom called me and said that cannibals had captured you. Totally abnormal, or what!"

My old girlfriend was there. She was putting herself through veterinary school by working at a dog beauty salon. The day she heard the news, she was so distracted she fell three dogs behind and almost got fired when the owners had to wait for their dogs.

One by one, they described in idiotic detail exactly what they had been doing when they heard that I was trapped in rebel territory in Sierra Leone. For some reason, what *they* were doing at the time was extremely important to them. But now that it was over, now that I was not dead, they were all so glad they didn't have to worry anymore! Wasn't I glad, too? They had a big celebration all planned. They had a long list of things we were going to do, all in one night: steak, ice cream, cold beer, movies, a hot tub. Everything they just knew I had been missing.

My buddy Kurt handed me an open beer, right there in the airport. I hesitated, just for a second, because lately I had been worried about certain African enemies of mine trying to poison me. And after all this hell happened, I wondered if somebody *had* poisoned me and turned me into somebody else.

I had to be hungry—starving!—they decided, so they took me to the restaurant first. We had to drive several cars, even though we didn't need them, because there were people with beepers and fold-up telephones who might be called away at any moment. I went with my girlfriend in a truck.

"Why are you driving a truck?" I asked.

"Sport utility," she said, without explaining what that meant.

It had automatic seat belts. Freezing air gushed out of the dashboard. A water-bed commercial came out of the radio, human voices speaking English words too fast to make any sense.

She had two dogs, and they were riding in the cargo area, lap things with bows in the hair around their ears. Bert and Ernie. They were purebreds of some kind. They looked like small creatures from a movie about another planet; they belonged in the lap of an evil intergalactic dictator who was about to destroy earthlings and all of human civilization by pressing a channel changer. She said she loved me and had missed me very much. There were two separate dishes in the back, because she used the Cycle Plan from Ken-L Ration. Bert ate Cycle Lite for overweight and less active adult dogs. Ernie ate Cycle Senior, which contains easily digestible protein for older dogs with slowing metabolisms. She said she wanted to make love to me but didn't want to catch whatever was making me sick. She wanted to put Ernie in a dog show, but there was something wrong with his teeth; she had to send him to a dog orthodontist, so she could win prizes with him and recoup the money she had paid for his lineage. She wished she could tell me just how worried and upset she had been about me being trapped behind rebel lines. Bert vomited every time he ate, so she had sent him to a pet psychologist, who said it was because she left her dogs alone all day while she was at school and at the salon, and then came home smelling of other dogs. That was also why he soiled the pillow at the head of her bed every day after she left. That's why she had the dogs in the back. She didn't want the bed to be full of shit when we went home. Between the dog problems and me in rebel trouble in Sierra Leone, she had been really upset. She was taking some pills called—Prozap?—that made her feel really, really wonderful and really great, and these pills had absolutely no side effects, and the studies had shown they were absolutely not addictive, so she could take them all day, every day, forever. I should take them, too, she advised, especially if seeing terrible things in Africa had made me sad.

The truck merged onto an interstate—a vast, empty expanse of smooth cement. No cars in front of us, no cars behind us. We could go as fast as we

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wanted. Every now and again another person drove by in a huge new car, driving right down the middle with vacant lanes on either side. The cars floated like glass-and-steel bubbles in outer space—beautiful spaceships with no passengers or goods or animals in them, just drivers driving in wide-open lanes and going as fast as they wanted, their windows rolled up, even though it was summer.

I had to stop at a gas station. I spared my girlfriend the full story of my intestinal woes by telling her I'd had a few beers on the plane. The toilet paper was very nice, but for just a second I forgot whether I was supposed to sit on the porcelain or just squat over it like the holes in the floor in West Africa.

The billboards were spectacular works of art, but I had trouble remembering why they were there. They were orange and yellow and red, with products and overblown human faces. Half-naked women in swimsuits and underwear fondled cigarettes and held them just so in front of their parted lips. These were very beautiful women, with swollen lips painted red and half open. I had not seen pictures of such women in quite a while. For three years, I had seen only village women, whose teats were sucked flat by the age of sixteen, and by twenty-two they had nipples banging against their bellies as they hulled rice.

These billboard women in dishabille were absolutely captivating. I knew that people had blown up these huge glossy photographs of half-naked women and had mounted them on billboards with spotlights because they knew that the instant I saw them I would want to make love to them. It was so obvious! Why else would they put those huge photos there? Why else would the breasts be so large and firm, and straining at the seams of flimsy garments? Global corporations had spent huge sums of money creating these images for me. They wanted me to look at them and think, *I'm ready now.*

But I had forgotten what all of these breasts and lips and provocations to make love had to do with cigarettes. I was on the verge of sorting it out when the dogs started barking in the cargo area. Bert had thrown up his Cycle Lite—which, frankly, had the attractive aroma of surplus protein.

WE got off the highway and drove up to a building with a massive plastic bull's head—bigger than the umbel of a full-grown palm, and lit from within by powerful beacons or searchlights. It was a glowing Angus steer's head mounted on a huge sign out front. This was some kind of advertisement for the steak house; I knew that, but again I had trouble making connections. I kept wanting to think it was a totem thing, like maybe Hindus were worshipping cows inside. Was I supposed to think that cattle were being killed and eaten in there? No, it was just an ad, a cute symbol, like the women getting ready to perform fellatio on a cigarette. I dwell on it only because this may have been the beginning of my disorientation and the start of the weird animal thing. Before I went in, I almost had myself all straightened out: *Sure, it's a big, glowing cow's head, because they serve cow meat inside.* But what if a horse's head were up there instead? Would that mean they served horse meat? No, that would probably mean it was a Western store selling boots and saddles. And what if it were a pig's head? I remember thinking that, and given what happened later, it may have been important.

Inside was a dark, crowded restaurant, blissfully cool, and lit by candles in ornate red bowls. A blood-colored glow rose from the bowls and flickered off the walls. Dishes clattered, silverware rang, glasses tinkled after toasts. The smell of food seared my belly with hunger. My skin thrilled to the blasts of cool air, but then I got cold and shivered.

We were seated at an altar that was covered with white cloth and set with chalices, gleaming silverware, and sacramental plates with gold inlays. All around us, very large pink people in evening dress were laughing, bowing over tables heaped with food, ice buckets, bottles of wine wrapped in towels and nestled in silver coolers, baskets of fresh-baked bread, and plates smeared with half-finished entrées.

My visual disturbances started with a huge round guy at the table next to us. He was talking about a woman who had cut off a man's penis. In fact, everybody was talking about a woman who had cut off a man's penis. People had been watching a program about this on TV while we were waiting for my bags at the airport. It had been on the radio in the truck. My girlfriend told me about it. And then she told everyone at the table that she had told me about it. Millions and millions of Americans were talking about a woman who had cut off a man's penis. What did I think of that, they wanted to know.

"So, wild man, tell us about Africa," they said next. "Were you living with savages or what?"

I was really hungry, eating all the bread, and wondering how square pieces of butter had fallen into my dish of extra ice. I wanted to order food, but everyone wanted drinks first, because we were celebrating.

The big guy at the next table kept laughing through his nose. Snorting, really. He was pink and puffy and swelling right out of his clothes. His laugh sounded like a holler at hog-killing time. He had jowls that cascaded over his collar. I heard the snorting again and looked over at him. Suddenly, everything was breathing, seething with too much light and texture. The carpeting, hair, and artificial plants in the room started growing. The snorting noise came from a pink snout in the middle of the man's face, with tufts of hair bristling out of the nostrils. His eyes were beady and veined in red, set close to the snout. He picked up a corncob and gnawed on it furiously. That's when I noticed the pink hooves. They were sticking right out of the sleeves of his coat.

I knew he couldn't really be a huge pig in a sports coat eating corn on the cob. But he was! A huge fucking bush pig, just like the ones I had seen in Sierra Leone, and that set me off on shape-shifting—maybe this was some kind of freak bush creature coming at me from the outside, the way they do in Africa. Or maybe someone had put a swear on me before I'd left my village, or put some hallucinogenic poison in my rice chop. I just needed an explanation for the visual disturbances, because they were happening all around me.

"Somebody said your country was invaded by cannibals. Are there really cannibals?"

The pig grabbed silverware in his pink hooves and sawed off a piece of

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meat, stabbed it with a fork, and stuffed it into his mouth.

"I love pork tenderloin," he said.

I tried not to look at the bush pig or talk about anything until I got myself under control. I looked at another table, across from me and behind my girlfriend. The candlelight wasn't very good over there. But then I heard squealing, and I got scared.

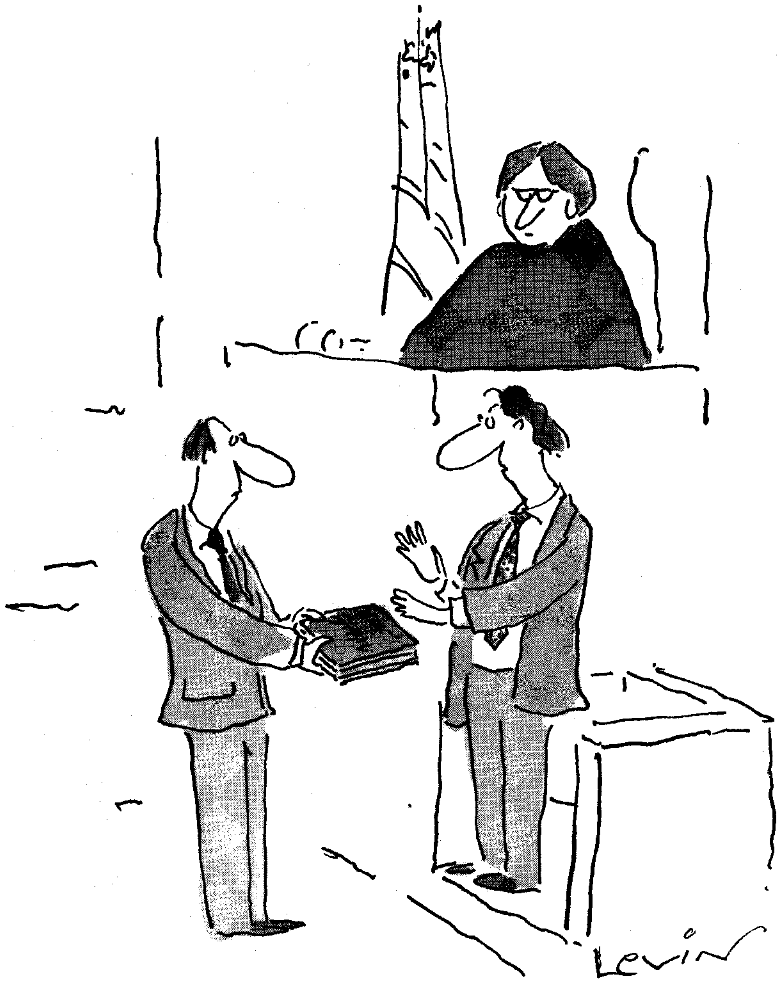
"But you have lost weight!" It was a woman's voice coming out of a lard-type Poland China swine, a speckled one in an evening gown. She had a collar of jewels on. "You have lost weight," she squealed again. "I told you that when I first saw you!"

"I'm heavier than I've ever been," insisted her companion, pushing aside a plate heaped with bones, gristle, and sauces.

Don't ask. Yes, she was one, too. A warthog with a pair of bifocals perched on her snout. Their mates were hefty, bacon-type males in tailcoats. My teeth chattered because of the air-conditioning. Hair grew out of the goosebumps on my arms and formed windrows on my limbs. I held on to the table, rifling my mental files, desperately searching for possible causes of spontaneous porcine hallucinations.

A pig waiter swept through the crowd with a dessert tray. A wild boar in a turtleneck waddled unsteadily among the tables in search of the rest room. At another table, four bush pigs in formal attire whispered behind their hooves and shrugged, then sipped from globes of wine and turned their attention to another waiter, who bowed and politely waited for the attention of everyone at the table.

"I'll take just a moment to tell you about this evening's off-the-menu specials," this waiter said. "First, for our appetizers, we are featuring a warm potato-and-goat-cheese terrine with baby beets and spinach greens, Irish-bacon vinaigrette, and hog headcheese. We also have a pancetta-wrapped, grilled loin of suckling pig with creamy polenta and pignoli-tomato-and-basil sauce. Finally—a personal favorite of mine—we have rillettes of pork with organic arugula salad, plum vinaigrette, Gorgonzola, walnuts, and prosciutto."



"What's in it for me?"

"That's mine," a male bush pig said with a wobble of his jowls. "I can eat prosciutto by the pound."

I was hoping that if this was a psychotic break, some kind of advisory would pass across the bottom of my screen. The waiter wasn't done yet.

"For our entrées this evening, the chef recommends Jamaican jerk-marinated and grilled tenderloin of pork with red beans, marjoram corn, tamarind sauce, and fried green plantains. We are also offering grilled paillard of pork loin with porcini mushrooms, smothered in a roasted-shallot-rosemary-zinfandel sauce, and accompanied by English peas, cumin gnocchi, and bacon gratin. We also have medallions of pork tenderloin served on a bed of sage linguini, black beans, chilis, roasted corn and peppers, tomato, cilantro, and annatto oil. Finally, we are serving pork Wellington stuffed with foie gras, truffles, and honey-orange-glazed wild-boar sausage."

I was really, really hungry. I couldn't find any crackers, so I started eyeballing the sugar bowl.

What did I think about all the violence here in America, they wanted to know. Had I been reading about it?

At another table, four huge Herefords and a couple of Berkshire swine had clearly had too much to drink and were laughing riotously at each other's muzzy attempts to order desserts, which were being displayed on a tray and lovingly described by an officious bush-pig waiter with a stylish hog ring in his snout and a braided pigtail. He spoke with a lisp, while shifting his weight and fanning the air with his free hoof.

It was a homosexual pig. I mean, a gay pig. I don't want to offend anyone. In Africa, I'd gotten wind of how sensitive people here are becoming about language. You have to be very careful and say things a certain precise way, unless you are talking about a woman cutting off a man's penis.

MORE tropical storms rumbled through my hollow bowels, and I excused myself to go to the men's room. When I walked by the kitchen, a porker in a white apron was shovelling platefuls of food into the huge steel maw of a garbage disposal.

"Hey!" I cried. I looked around the place for somebody to help me notice what was happening.

Plates of food steamed on shelves. Blocks of slotted wood bristled with butcher knives and two-tined forks, bread knives and meat cleavers. A thicket of utensils hung from the ceiling like stainless-steel vegetation. The sides of the pass-through were studded with magnets suspending a single huge carving knife as if in midair. It looked like the cutlasses the villagers had used to clear their farms.

A big Tamworth boar in a butcher's apron streaked with blood smiled at me and waved.

"Howdy," he said cheerfully.

Behind him, a skewered shoat rotated over a vented broiler.

"What?" said the porker at the disposal, emptying another plateful of steak down the drain.

"Don't throw that food away," I said. "I'm really, really hungry. I would eat that. Really, I could. I bet I could find people for you who would eat that."

"Fuckin' A," said the porker, and looked over his shoulder.

I decided I would explain it all to him after I explored another First World latrine. This time the toilet paper was as thick as linen, and it had designs embossed on it. I knew some African tailors who could make shirts out of the stuff.

There were pigs in the stalls next to me, snorting and rooting, stamping their hooves and making water.

When I came out, the porker was shovelling more platefuls of food into the steel drain.

"Hey!" I yelled.

"Hey, what?" somebody said.

A big black bush pig in a security guard's uniform was leaning against a cigarette machine.

"Hey, what?" he said. He had a gun in a holster. He kept talking, but the gun scared me so bad I couldn't understand what he was saying. Wait! What am I saying? He was not a black pig. He was a colored pig—I mean, a pig of color. Never mind, he was an African-American pig. I was having trouble because he was not speaking Sierra

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Leonean Krio, and I knew that if I made a mistake and started talking Krio to him, maybe it wouldn't go over very well.

I hadn't seen a gun in three years. Only the Liberians had had guns. The only guns in Sierra Leone were carried by the president's special forces in Freetown. The other policemen carried truncheons for beating people. Why did this pig have a gun? Maybe it really had become much more violent here since I had left. The talk at the table was a warning. Maybe everybody had guns, except me. Maybe you even had to watch out in restaurants. Maybe this pig would use this gun on somebody like me, who was having trouble. I wanted to let him know that I was having visual disturbances. That I was probably very sick, or somebody had put a swear on me, or poisoned me; just let him know that it was my first night back and parts of me hadn't finished the trip yet.

He was speaking a language I couldn't understand. And I noticed that the little leather band that snaps over the hammer and keeps the gun in the holster was unfastened. I realized that the security pig had unsnapped it before he came over here, because he knew he might have to use it on me. This pig of color was going to shoot me!

When I looked up, pigs were standing in a chute and hollering at me. Back in the kitchen plates of food were still being thrown into the garbage disposal. More pigs lined up, staring at me with beady eyes. A swear had followed me home to America! I was afraid that if I moved, the African-American pig would charge, just the way bush pigs do, in which case I would need an ear to prove my innocence. If I ran away, this pig would think I was prey. He trotted over and took me by the arm. Instead of running, I grabbed the carving knife.

A face appears at the little rectangle of chicken-wired glass in my door.

"We are coming in to give you your medication and assist you in using the personal-hygiene facility," says the face's mouth.

My second dose. My parents and my girlfriend have hired lawyers, doctors, and psychiatrists, who will be paid thousands of dollars to clean up this mess. It seems there's nothing wrong back in this country that can't be explained by scrambled brain chemistry. These well-groomed professionals don't know the first thing about pulling the swear that somebody put on me; instead they keep chanting something that sounds like "post-automatic hex disorder," which the medication is supposed to fix, by dipping my thoughts in mud before I think them.

The door opens and six guys fan out around me, some pink, others black. Faces are still dangerously volatile, so I focus on the linoleum beneath my feet. A black hand and a paper cup of green liquid move into my peripheral vision. Voices come at me from different directions—a geek chorus of psychiatric attendants.

"You can use the personal-hygiene facility with two male staff in attendance," says one.

Time passes. A throat clears in a low giggle.

"Seen your picture in the paper, man. You bad."

"That means I'm good, right?"

"Too good. Took sixty-eight stitches to sew that cop's ear back on. Why you wanna cut off a cop's ear?"

Another one says, "If you don't use the facility now, you will not be able to use it for another hour."

"Why'd you cut that cop, dude?"

Somebody else hisses, "Don't get him going again."

"Your lawyer called and said he will be back to see you tomorrow," one says, taking the cup after I drink the green stuff.

"I told you I don't want a lawyer," I say. "A lawyer can't make sense of this. Only God can make sense of this. I told you to get me a priest. I want a Roman Catholic priest, who knows about Hell!"

"A priest is coming this afternoon," one of them says.

"Yeah," says another. "We got you a priest."

They walk backward out the door and lock the bolts.

They call this "the quiet room." In here it's perfectly smooth and white. No surface in all of West Africa is as smooth and as white as the walls of this room. ♦

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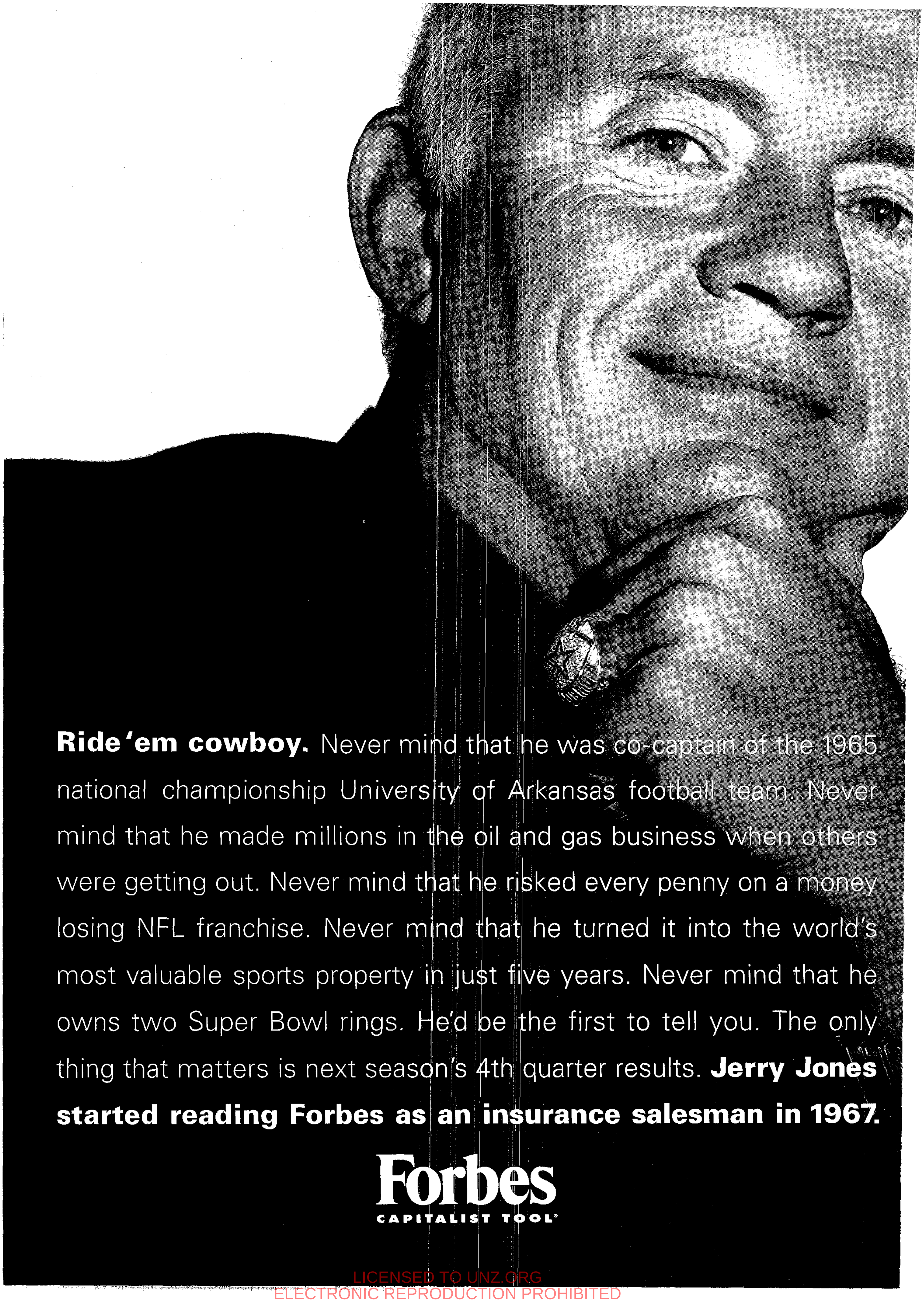

Ride 'em cowboy. Never mind that he was co-captain of the 1965 national championship University of Arkansas football team. Never mind that he made millions in the oil and gas business when others were getting out. Never mind that he risked every penny on a money losing NFL franchise. Never mind that he turned it into the world's most valuable sports property in just five years. Never mind that he owns two Super Bowl rings. He'd be the first to tell you. The only thing that matters is next season's 4th quarter results. **Jerry Jones started reading Forbes as an insurance salesman in 1967.**

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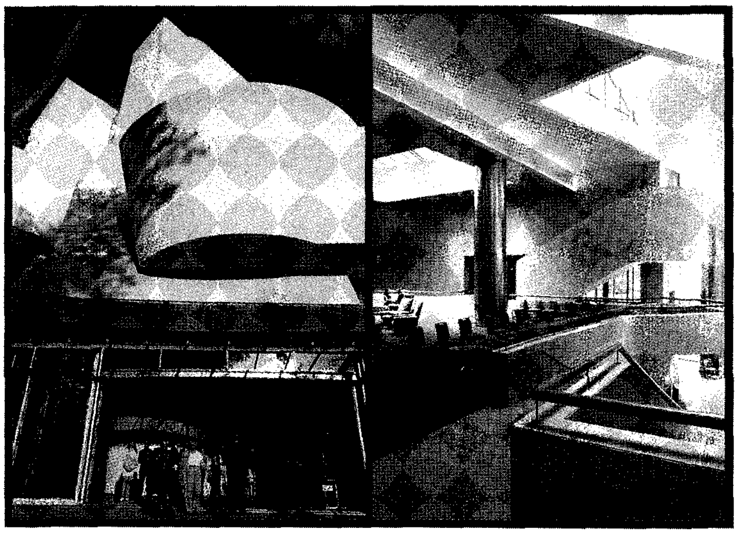
THE CRITICS

THE SKY LINE

THE AMERICAN IN PARIS

BY BRENDAN GILL

At a ceremony to be held at the Lotos Club on October 12th, the architect Frank Gehry will be presented with the first Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize. Lillian Gish, in her will, left several million dollars with which to endow the prize. According to the terms of the will, the prize, amounting to approximately two hundred and fifty thousand dollars, is to go annually to a man or woman "who has made an outstanding contribution to the beauty of the world and to mankind's enjoyment and understanding of life," whether through the performing arts or through such other forms of art as architecture, painting, sculpture, poetry, and literature. The jury in charge of bestowing the prize—one of the largest arts prizes in existence—has made an unsurprising choice. At the moment, it may safely be said of Gehry that he is the most fashionable architect in the world. And if being fashionable is the primal curse of a profession where reputations rise and fall with a celerity not exceeded in haute couture or dietetics, Gehry's work is strong enough to survive the more or less mindless approbation that fame imposes on its victims.



Gaîté Parisienne: Frank Gehry's recently opened American Center in Paris—a building that dances.

E. SCORCELLETTI AND XAVIER TESTELIN/GAMMA LIAISON

Moreover, at sixty-five Gehry is approaching the ideal age for the receipt of prizes. Architects tend to live a long time—offhand, I can think of half a dozen American architects who practiced into their nineties—and the later they are beset by honors the better. A few years ago, Gehry was awarded the Pritzker Prize, which is invariably described as being the equivalent in architecture of a Nobel Prize. Some of his friends feared that he was too young for it, but in fact it did him no harm whatever. He received commissions in greater number and on a bigger scale, and the exuberant chance-taking that had helped to shape his reputation increased as well.

Gehry has been quoted in the press as saying that news of his being awarded the Gish Prize boggled his mind. This is nonsense, uttered in the name of a conventional false modesty. Gehry's is a mind not known to boggle, and he is in no doubt of his talent. Perhaps as he advances into old age he will be candid enough to boast, as Yeats did in *his* old age, that the soul is self-delighting—a way of saying that the best of prizes is oneself. Gehry seems to me to have an exceptionally sunny aptitude for life. He has encouraged this aptitude to manifest itself in his work, sometimes with an air of rambunctious hit-or-missness that the more inhibited among his colleagues have found unnerving. A favorite adjective employed by Gehry's critics is "improvisational," though on examination his work will nearly always turn out to have been planned down to the last millimetre—a pin couldn't be fitted between what appears at first glance to be a slapdash misalliance of opposing horizontals and perpendiculars.

That first glance is the highest hurdle that Gehry customarily has to surmount. A passerby unfamiliar with his work might well be astonished or alarmed by the apparitional aspect of a Gehry building: what on earth is it made of, what is holding it up, what can it possibly contain? This imagined passerby would not be inclined to call the building beautiful—indeed, in many cases, including that of Gehry's own house (seemingly a post-cyclonic accumulation of industrial debris), he would call it downright ugly. When Miss Gish wrote in her will of a person's contributing to the beauty of the world, she would probably not have had a Gehry in mind, but then beauty notoriously resists defining; it is likely that the jury for the Gish Prize will always be tempted to pay stricter attention to what its donor wrote about making a contribution to mankind's enjoyment and understanding of life. And that Gehry has done in abundance.

The new headquarters of the American Center in Paris, which opened in June, is among the latest of Gehry's projects to reach completion. It is characteristic of his career that when he is commissioned to design a particular building he is more or less openly counted on to produce a novelty—one that, without regard to its merits as architecture, will arouse discussion and debate. Indeed, the city planners of Paris shared with the American Center a desire for a display of Gehry fireworks, and with a sound bureaucratic reason: they were engaged in developing a section of the city that few Parisians, to say nothing of tourists, had ever visited, or had ever wished to visit—a flat-as-a-platter area called Bercy, in the Twelfth Arrondissement, a mile or so up the Seine from the Île de la Cité. Until recently, it was a district devoted to wholesale wine depots and other commercial enterprises, interspersed with blocks of bleakly anonymous housing. Bent upon turning the face of the city eastward, the planners assumed the task of transforming Bercy—much as their predecessors in the late nineteenth century had set about transforming the jumble of Montparnasse—into a desirable upper-middle-class residential and shopping district.

To begin with (and not altogether wisely, in the view of many architectural preservationists), the planners of the redevelopment of Bercy prescribed the knocking down of a number of the old vaulted wine depots on the right bank of the Seine in order to create a park; today, the park consists of an ample expanse of level green lawns and flower beds, with a cat's cradle of walkways threaded among ancient trees. The attractiveness of the park is intended to lure new residents and white-collar corporations into the neighborhood. In addition, several major civic projects have been placed in close proximity to the park. They include an immense all-purpose sports stadium, the steep slopes of whose exterior walls are sown with grass, mitigating its bulk and suggesting that the park itself may be taking off into the sky; an office building ten stories high and more than a thousand feet long, which houses the Ministry of Finance; and the new headquarters of the National Library, a glass-walled skyscraper complex whose design has aroused much criticism—books and light are natural enemies.

Gehry's American Center is among the projects intended to add an authentically Parisian note of urban seductiveness to barren Bercy. Gehry himself has described the Center as an expression of his "fantasy" of Paris. With that seeming obedience to reality which fantasy depends on, Gehry has constructed the Center not out of the cheap and readily available odds and ends with which he first made his reputation in California but out of the pale-lemony-yellow limestone, quarried in Saint-Maximin, that has been the favored building material of Paris for several centuries. Similarly, he has roofed the Center with the traditional silvery-gray zinc that merges so naturally with the pearly light Paris is famous for. At the time of the Center's opening ceremonies, it was reported in the press that Parisians were disappointed not to behold evidence of Gehry's early experiments in what he has called "unfinished" architecture. In fact, the French are no better acquainted with Gehry's career as it has evolved over the past thirty-odd years than most Americans are, and the Center as designed and built is therefore a curiosity that may or may not delight the French but surely cannot have disappointed their expectations.

The Center stands at the entrance to the Parc Bercy and pretends—here Gehry is indeed being seductive—to be altogether in and of the park, with a pair of unusually wide glass doors in the ground-floor lobby that roll aside to embrace the view, and with cascades of windows rippling down the upper floors. Through the highest of these windows, and from balconies adjoining them, one can catch glimpses of the Seine. The wide lobby doors stake a claim both real and symbolic on the park, but in the ordinary course of events visitors will enter the building through a doorway facing the Rue de Bercy, which is newly lined with sleek apartment houses, brasseries, and even a Novotel clad in glass and gaudy tile. Not far from the Center stands a row of small nineteenth-century workers' houses, stucco-walled and tile-roofed; they appear to have survived as a result of some obscure bureaucratic miscalculation, which has bestowed on them the air of wistful aliens. Not having changed at all, they are altogether changed.

According to a well-known Biblical precept, a house divided against itself cannot stand. In non-metaphorical terms, Gehry takes a vehemently contradictory view: in his eyes, a house divided not only stands but flourishes, with much of its interest derived from the degree to which it astonishes us, both optically and psychologically. The American Center,

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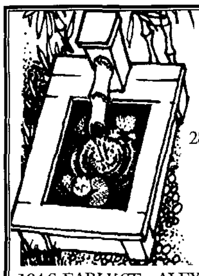

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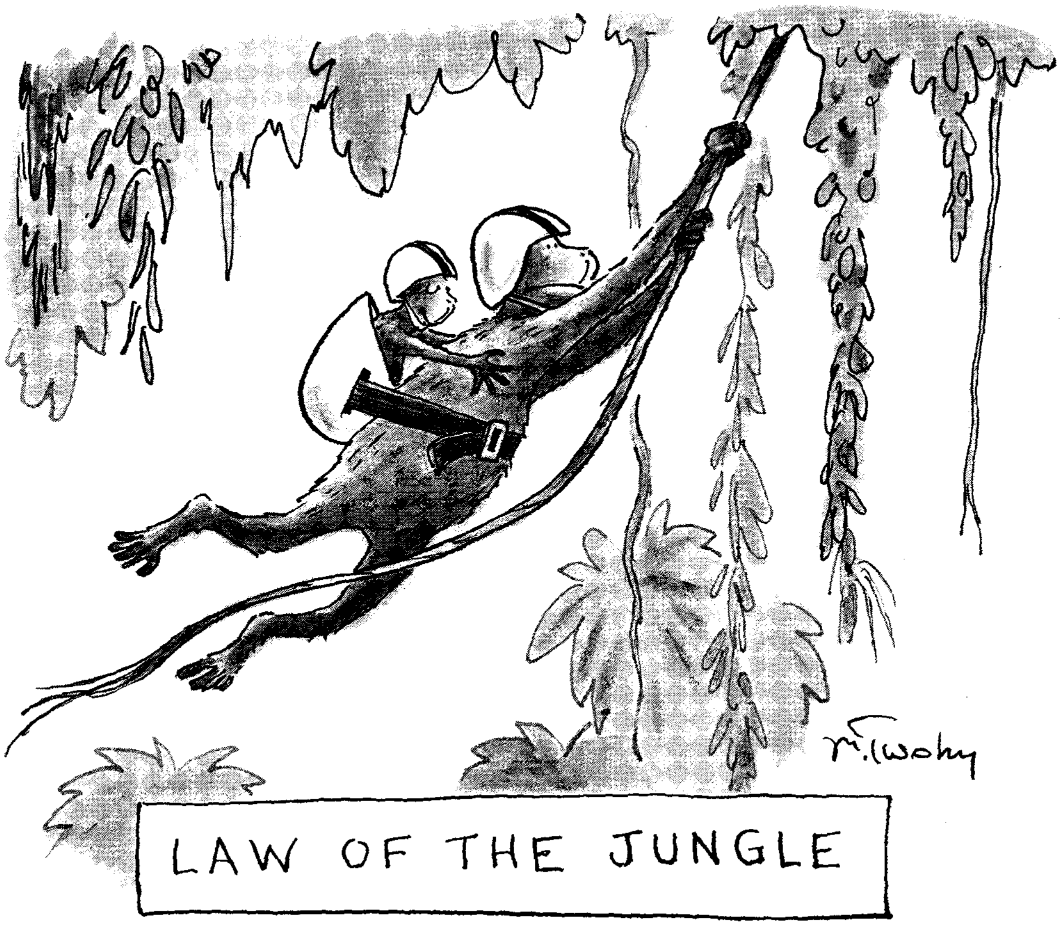
though it is but a single building occupying a comparatively small site, appears to be a cluster of disparate buildings, with walls and rooftrees pitching this way and that, like a band of tipsy choristers making their way home after a merry night on the town. If it is Gehry's fantasy of Paris, the Paris he has in mind is plainly closer to Toulouse-Lautrec's than to Poussin's; indeed, he has gone as far as to compare the canopy that falls friskily down the park side of the Center with the fringe of a dancer's tutu. But then classic Vitruvian decorum is, as a rule, of little concern to him. (The Frances Howard Goldwyn Regional Branch Library, in Hollywood, is among the few exceptions.) What he offers us at the Center, in a characteristic display of chance-taking, is a sort of Gehry's "Gaîté Parisienne." The building dances, and so do we.



The Center boasts that it is the largest American overseas arts organization. It was founded in 1931, and its initial mandate was "to foster understanding between France and the United States through social, educational, and general cultural activities." Money was raised for the construction of a substantial building at 261 Boulevard Raspail, in the heart of Montparnasse. Over the past twenty years, the Center has sponsored the European débuts of plays by Robert Lowell, Lanford Wilson, Sam Shepard, and many other American playwrights, along with theatre productions by the Bread and Puppet Theatre, Ellen Stewart's La MaMa, and Mabou Mines. John Cage, Merce Cunningham, and Steve Reich have performed and taught there as part of an artists-in-residence program, which, with the support of the Rockefeller Foundation, has provided a total of well over four hundred residencies, three hundred and fifty workshops, five hundred performances, and thirty exhibitions.

By 1987, the Center had long since outgrown its Raspail headquarters. What was once its swimming pool had been converted into a dance-rehearsal space, its canteen had become a tap-dance studio, and the bowling alley was a makeshift jazz-percussion studio. The board of directors decided to sell the property, at a pleasingly high price, and to accept an offer from the city to buy a plot of ground, at a pleasingly low price, bordering on the newly created Parc Bercy, where a building better suited to the Center's present cultural needs would be constructed. In 1988, Gehry was chosen as the architect of the new building, and construction began in 1991.

GEHRY'S Center—his "house divided"—asserts what might be called a formal incoherence, being on the park side a puckish polyhedron and on the Rue de Bercy side a comparatively conventional square box. Starting at the top, the box, which is eight stories high, is matter-of-factly vertical; at about the fourth-floor level, it begins to soften and bulge outward, leaving the pedestrian observer of the building puzzled, if not nettled. How is it possible for a seemingly rigid limestone wall to melt? Is the architect saying, "Look! I may have abandoned chain-link fencing as an appropriate wraparound, but I can turn stone into something equally slinky and supple"? Whatever the answer, it is when we enter the building that we begin to comprehend the purpose behind Gehry's chance-taking: a purpose that puts one in mind of Cyril Connolly's dictum that inside every fat man is a thin man struggling to escape. For with architecture, too, it is the case that inside every structure an indeterminate presence—what one may call the "idea" of the structure—is struggling to find expression, and not by means of its floor plans and elevations (these are merely the instructions necessary to a builder and can lead an unwary reader of them far astray) but by means of the manipulation of volumes of space which we respond to, whether consciously or unconsciously, much as we do to certain combinations of sound or color.

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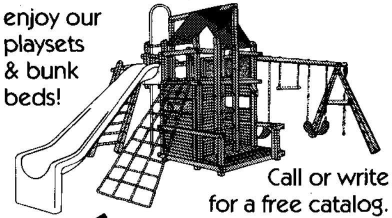

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respond, whether eagerly or in spite of ourselves. The architect, working in whatever is the dominant mode of his particular culture, exercises, more or less in secret, his gift for creating, literally out of thin air, spaces that give direction to our emotions—make us feel awe, or joy, or fear. (Henry Hobson Richardson's Allegheny County Courthouse and Jail, in Pittsburgh, is capable of making us feel all three.) An architect either possesses or doesn't possess a mental knack for moving about at ease in three dimensions as he imagines a design; nothing on earth can make him a successful architect without it, and even among those architects to whom history has granted a lofty place the size of the gift varies markedly. Benjamin Latrobe, for example, greatly exceeded his friend and patron Thomas Jefferson in the creation of generous, liberating volumes of space, and Frank Lloyd Wright in his day exceeded in similar fashion his friend and mentor Louis Sullivan.

Gehry is preëminent among contemporary architects in exploiting this indispensable attribute. It has often been said of him that, like the Cubist painters, he causes his spaces to bend time, striving to give us simultaneously what appear to be multiple aspects of the same façades, and inducing in the more timid a jittery feeling of doubt, perhaps even of apprehension: where do *we* stand vis-à-vis a structure so calculatedly at odds with our habits of seeing? It is a question that turns out to be even more pressing inside the Center than outside. We enter a big, multistoried lobby, which leaps heavenward like a prodigious Sioux tepee incongruously fitted out with skylights and exit signs. Soon enough, we discover that this seemingly unfocussed central space is in fact as intricately designed—as intensely utilitarian—as the interior of a watch. From it one gains access to almost every part of an exceptionally complicated building: in one direction, the wing that parallels the Rue de Bercy and provides twenty-six apartments of varying sizes for visiting artists and scholars; in another direction, a four-hundred-seat theatre, with a proscenium stage wider and deeper than most Broadway theatres have; in still other directions, a hundred-seat cinema and lecture hall, an art gallery with more than ten thousand square feet of exhibition space, two black-box spaces for both performance and sound-and-film recording, an audiovisual center, executive offices, a subterranean parking garage, and spaces that have been set aside for a restaurant-café, a bookstore, and a design shop.

Not a tepee, then, that light-filled welcoming lobby, but much more nearly the kind of space that Gehry himself described to reporters during the Center's opening ceremonies. Gehry, who arrived at the Rue de Bercy with that measure of tardiness and elusiveness which is the official stamp on one's certificate of fame (the public-address speakers kept braying, "Will Mr. Gehry please come to the platform as soon as possible?"), is not the slangy standup comedian that he was in his younger days. Along with his white hairs he has put on a cloak of whimsical dignity, which, though still a few sizes too large for him, is bound to prove an excellent fit in future. He has certainly mastered the art of public utterance, which is to be smilingly affirmative but not funny—we do not wish our great ones to crack jokes, especially (as Gehry was accustomed to do) at their own expense. What he had sought to provide throughout the Center, he said, was "spaces that present opportunities to improvise, where creative things will happen between people spontaneously, just as in a city street." He added, "The building is a microcosm of the city, with different activities colliding and causing a joyful effect." The two most important words in this statement are "colliding" and "joyful." Perhaps never before in architecture has joy been thought to flow from collision. To Gehry, it is the most natural consequence in the world. ♦

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[*From the Monterey* (*Calif.*) *Peninsula Review*]

The Carmel Shake-speare Festival continues with shows of *Henry V* at 8 p.m. today, Friday, Saturday and Sunday at the Outdoor Forest Theatre, located on the corner of Santa Rita and Mountain View in Carmel.

In *Henry V*, the perfect king is depicted—young, yet wise beyond his years. The play is full of action, humor, intrigue and romance.

Henry V will run through Oct. 7, and is the second play in the Carmel Shake-speare Festival's trilogy, which started with Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Mikado* and will conclude with a run of *Julius Caesar* upon the end of *Henry V*'s run.

The name "Shake-speare" is hyphenated because those behind the festival doubt whether William Shakespeare existed.

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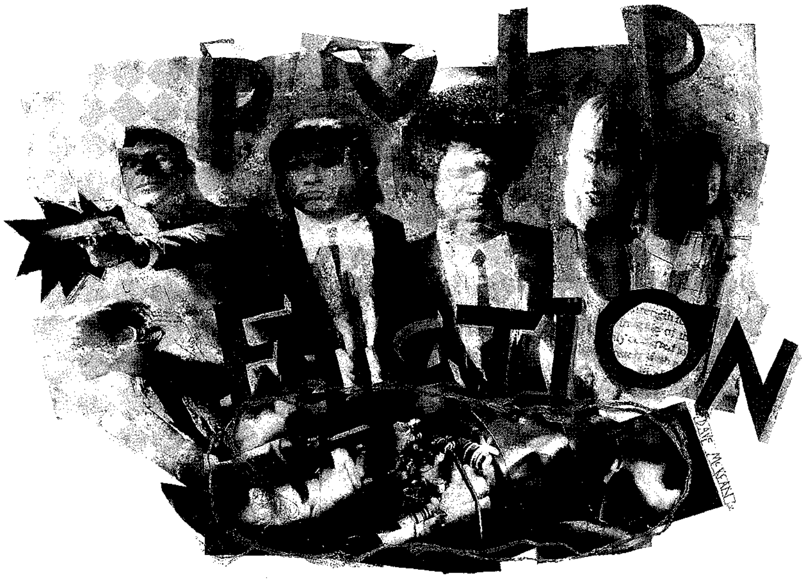
DEGREES OF COOL

BY ANTHONY LANE

EVERYBODY knows the old E. M. Forster distinction between story and plot: "The king died and then the queen died" is a story. "The king died and then the queen died of grief" is a plot. Fair enough, but what Forster failed to foresee was the emergence of a third category, the Quentin Tarantino plot, which goes something like this: "The king died while having sex on the hood of a lime-green Corvette, and the queen died of contaminated crack borrowed from the court jester, with whom she was enjoying a conversation about the relative merits of Tab and Diet Pepsi as they sat and surveyed the bleeding remains of the lords and ladies whom she had just blown away with a stolen .45 in a fit of grief." It is hard to know what Forster would have made of Tarantino's new movie, "Pulp Fiction." I suspect he would have run gibbering into his study, locked the door, and hidden behind the bookshelves. Not just because of the bloodshed—all that brain matter suddenly appearing on the outsides of people's skulls, instead of working quietly within, where it belongs—but because of the equal violence done to narrative form.



Petit Guignol: Quentin Tarantino's "Pulp Fiction."

"Pulp Fiction" contains at least three plots, but it's not a portmanteau movie, like "Dead of Night" or "Tales of Manhattan"; the whole purpose of the different threads is to cross-weave, tangle up with each other, and fray at the ends. The first involves Vincent (John Travolta) and Jules (Samuel L. Jackson), a pair of tough guys sent to fetch a briefcase from some preppy crooks and deliver the appropriate punishment. There may be some gunfire involved, but that doesn't bother Vince; what bothers Vince is that his boss, Marsellus (Ving Rhames), is going out of town and leaving his young wife, Mia (Uma Thurman), in Vince's care and protection. Events prove that he was right to worry. The second strand involves Butch (Bruce Willis), a boxer paid by Marsellus to lose a fight. Not only does he not lose—he actually kills his opponent, and then prepares to flee with his girlfriend, Fabienne (Maria de Medeiros). The final strand returns us to Vince and Jules, who now have a new problem, a car full of blood. This calls for serious valeting, so they bring in The Wolf (Harvey Keitel), who makes the problem disappear. Then everyone goes off to have breakfast.

The film sounds simple enough; but the various components seldom behave as they should, and there are roles for Tim Roth, Amanda Plummer, Eric Stoltz, and Rosanna Arquette that are

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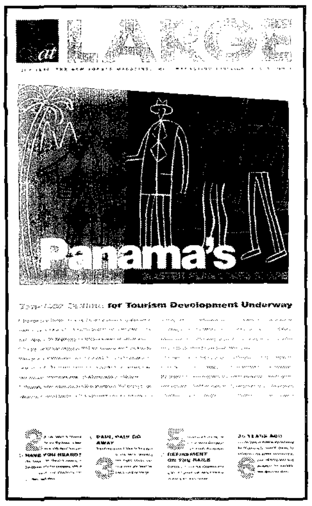

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almost too complicated to explain. For Tarantino, chronology exists to be messed around with, to be looped and spliced. A main character dies, but before we can mourn his passing we find ourselves flipping back to a time when he was still in one piece. Tarantino is playing an old Godard game, plugging our emotions just as we're about to let them flow. It may be a cold and cunning way to cut a movie, but it's urged on by a serious desire to stop any schmalz creeping through the cracks in the script. Elsewhere, though, he seems to be playing around for no reason at all, revelling in the sheer dictatorial power of the filmmaker, and forgetting that there are people out in the theatre who want to get on with the show. Butch, the boxer, has a lucky watch that he treasures, a family heirloom; most directors would want us to take that on trust, but Tarantino has to shut the entire plot down for a while in order to prove it. We have to sit through a childhood flashback and a deadpan cameo from Christopher Walken, who explains that Butch's father stashed the watch up his ass for five years. It's a joke, but hardly a good joke; and, having written it, Tarantino has to shoehorn the damn thing into his picture whether it fits or not. The enfant terrible of Hollywood can sometimes be a real kid.

The architecture of "Pulp Fiction" may look skewed and strained, but the decoration is a lot of fun. I loved the little curls of suspense that kept us waiting for fresh characters, the details pondered by the camera in advance of a full-face shot: the feet of Uma Thurman, the Band-Aid on the back of Ving Rhames's neck, and the smooth tuxedo of Harvey Keitel, who appears, rather stylishly, to be throwing a party at eight-thirty in the morning. The whole movie, all two and a half hours, is studded with teases and alibis: hit men stop to argue when they should be getting on with the job, and thus raise the level of threat; even the plots are more like subplots, seamy sidelines into which Tarantino is poking his nose—somewhere, you tell yourself, up above this gutter life the main event is going on. It's a bizarre trick; imagine erasing the hero from "King Lear," leaving nothing but squabbling brothers and sisters and an old guy strapped to a chair, scared of losing his eyes. Tarantino is ready to romp in vile jelly; you can hear him snickering at his own brand of Petit Guignol, and inviting us to join in. When Butch needs a weapon, he picks up a hammer, then a baseball bat, then a chainsaw, and finally, to his vast satisfaction, a curved Japanese sword; and when Mia needs a jab of adrenaline through the sternum, the horror is held at bay as long as possible, while Vince brandishes a needle that looks like a prop from "Moby-Dick."

But these are the preludes to violence; as Marsellus so delightfully promises, "I'm gonna get medieval on your ass." What about the stuff itself? "Pulp Fiction" arrives with a reputation for being almost unwatchable, which is a publicist's scheme for getting everyone to watch it. At the risk of being a killjoy, I have to say that Tarantino is not quite the Pied Piper of mayhem—the joykill, so to speak—that he wants to be. Like "Reservoir Dogs," the new picture feels more violent than it actually is. You could say the same of "The Big Heat"; but Lang's movie was a moral furnace, stoked with such guilt and vengefulness that nobody could come near the action without getting burned. Tarantino functions in a moral vacuum where the brutality is mostly verbal, where sticks and stones can break my bones but words can *really* hurt me. (The most violent movie he could make would have no violence at all, just talk: gangsta rap meets Ivy Compton-Burnett.) People queue up to attack a passing idea, the punier and more trivial the better: hamburgers, milkshakes, great coffee—all of them fast food for thought. The effect should be mock-heroic, but it pushes beyond that; think of Andy Warhol, who realized that if you blew a plain image up to absurd proportions, or reproduced it often enough, you were not sneering at its ordinariness but somehow gilding it with a glamour and pathos of its own. Tarantino is less an ironist than a chronic fetishist; he has cooked up a world where hamburgers matter, and nothing else.

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Despite its title, the movie owes far more to the Pop artists of the fifties and sixties than to the pulp writers of previous decades. The brackish streams of mood and motive that flowed beneath the work of James M. Cain and David Goodis may not have run deep, but they never ran dry; and the low-lit Los Angeles of Chandler is continents away from the garish, spasmodic town of Tarantino's fancy. Their only common currency is the knowledge that life is cheap; as Chandler wrote, "It is not funny that a man should be killed, but it is sometimes funny that he should be killed for so little, and that his death should be the coin of what we call civilization." But Chandler smiled at the joke, his rueful prose no broader than Bogart's smile; Tarantino laughs out loud. The idea of putting a man of honor on the mean streets, if only for dramatic contrast, would never occur to him. That is why, for all the wild things that happen on them, the streets of "Pulp Fiction" stay as flat as a map.

If anyone holds this movie together, it isn't Tarantino—it's John Travolta. He strolls through it without a wink of vanity, having long since relinquished the oily posing of "Saturday Night Fever" in favor of the first law of cool: Don't try to be cool. The very title, "Pulp Fiction," sounds like a description of his face—luscious but squashy, easily bruised, the look of a former pretty boy who can still inspire tall tales. While Tarantino clamors for our attention, Travolta knows that he has it and isn't going to lose it in a hurry. He can afford to rumple and fatten his character, turning Vince into a slob and a patsy, driving the picture beyond the regulation hipness of "Reservoir Dogs" into a shabbier territory, where a man is known not just by his suit or his ruthlessness but by his hits of bliss and his flashes of panic, the big mistakes he can make as he tries to correct the little ones. What stays with you after "Pulp Fiction" has ended (and amazingly little *does* stay with you) is the closeup of Vince's slow, drugged smile as he drives through the darkness to meet Mia, or the rather endearing shots of him sitting on the toilet reading "Modesty Blaise." Travolta has the nerve, in the midst of what feels like an action movie, to remind us of the pleasures of inactivity, the deep need to hang out.

My favorite scene comes at Jack Rabbit Slim's. This is Tarantino heaven, a movie-prop diner where you can order a Douglas Sirk steak from a Buddy Holly look-alike. Vince is eating with Mia, and trying hard not to fall for her. When she asks him to dance, he refuses, then yields. You brace yourself for a big Travolta moment. Will he nip to the men's room and come back in a white suit and black shirt? Will he roll his hands and point at the glitter ball? No way; the two of them take to the floor and quietly twist, while the camera stands to one side, snatches a couple of closeups, then fades them out halfway through. It's a triumph of discretion, the only one in the movie, and you can't help feeling that Travolta and Thurman have calmed the director down. Tarantino is an artist mad for affect, terrified that his audience may be bored or moved (the same thing, as far as he's concerned). But his actors are ahead of the game; people like Samuel L. Jackson and Maria de Medeiros, and even a nicely troubled Bruce Willis, fight to flesh the movie out with warm-blooded gestures of feeling. That is what makes "Pulp Fiction" such an intriguing spectacle: not the acrylic brightness of its design, or even the funny filth of its patter, but the tension between the manic skills of its inventor and the refusal of his subjects to be treated like cartoons. It may well be that in thirty years the Tarantino landscape will look as bleached and dated as Antonioni's; that the blank morality and wicked accoutrements of "Pulp Fiction" and "Reservoir Dogs"—leather and chains, Madonna talk, sodomy in a dark corner—will have no more purchase on our imagination than do the rolling nudes and long, soporific takes of "Red Desert." If the work does survive and prosper, it will owe a lot to the performers who flocked to Tarantino and confronted his ceaseless energy with their own. You catch a hint of the conflict to come, I think, in the climactic speech of "Pulp Fiction," magnificently delivered by Jackson. "You're the weak, and I'm the tyranny of evil men," he declaims. "But I'm trying, Ringo, I'm trying real hard to be the shepherd." Will Quentin Tarantino try as hard? My guess is that he'll be too busy roasting the lambs. ♦

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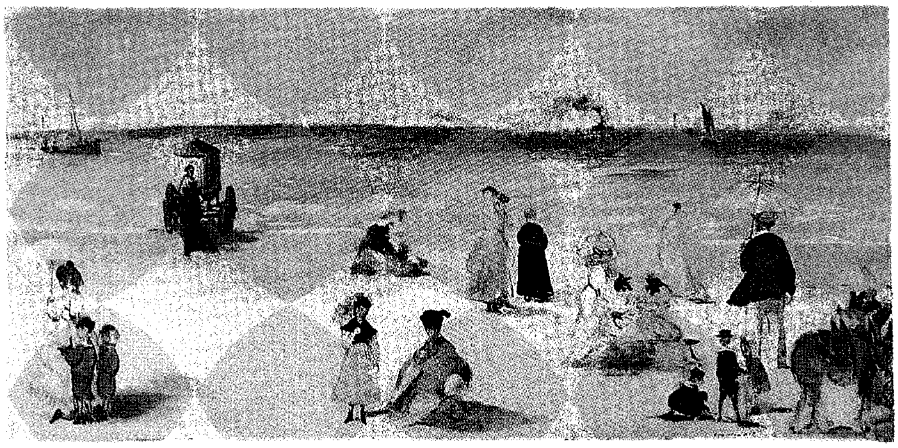
THE ART WORLD

BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT

BY ADAM GOPNIK



"On the Beach at Boulogne" (1868), by Édouard Manet.

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THERE was a much publicized experiment some years back in which a chemistry student searching for the origins of life put together a "primal soup" of the miscellaneous gunk that might have been around on earth at its very beginning and then arranged to have it struck by artificial lightning. The lightning hit the soup, and the bits and pieces began to assemble themselves into amino acids and all the other little building blocks of life. "Origins of Impressionism," this season's blockbuster at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, is an attempt to conduct a similar experiment in search of the origins of modern painting. All the miscellaneous gunk of art in France in the eighteen-sixties, from Salon nudes to newspaper sketches—a lot of it pretty inorganic, not to say stone-cold dead—has been meticulously assembled by a team of curators into a single broth. The trouble is that they forgot to add the electricity. What was once electric, and ought to seem so now—chiefly, the painting of Manet—has been so diffused into corridors of minor masters, nonmasters, sidelights, and side issues that it can only glimmer instead of seeming really charged. The show is all soup and no lightning.

Which is not surprising, and maybe not even so bad. Museums have a natural institutional bias in favor of soup, which you can always reheat, and against lightning, which comes and goes and can't be bottled. The only real problem with the exhibition is that it may inadvertently serve the notion—implicit in a conservative form in this show, and explicit in a more aggressive form in a lot of the contemporary art-historical literature that serves as its rationale—that there was never any lightning in the first place, and that the old soup became new soup just by sloshing back and forth.

Of course, the cliché account of Impressionism, in which a world of "academic painting"—represented most often, and most unfairly, by the coy nudes of Bouguereau—was heroically interrupted by a revolutionary new blaze of light and truth and modernity, has always been more legend than history. In the last twenty years, for example, we've learned that landscape was a favored Salon genre before it became the pet Impressionist genre, and that in the eighteen-sixties the academic nude was already in the midst of a series of revisions tending in a more realistic direction. But art historians are always prey to a version of Zeno's paradox, in which every moment of the arrow's flight can be infinitely subdivided into smaller units, so that the arrow never lands. In this case, the trap takes the form of believing that everything in Impressionism can be traced back to some traditional element in academic painting, so that history never happens.

In Paris, where the exhibition originated—at the Grand Palais, though under the auspices of the Musée d'Orsay—an overdose of historical consciousness killed it, and left it hanging lifeless on the walls. In New York, it looks incomparably better. Gary Tinterow, the Met's curator of nineteenth-century painting, has installed the show in what has by now become his inimitable dinner-at-eight style—in enviably spacious rooms full of suggestive, distilled period architecture, with the pictures placed in calming intervals against big walls of burgundy and gold and marine. Tinterow has brought more order and drama to the miscellany than it had before; more, perhaps, than it has any right to have. He follows an introductory stanza of mediocre painting from the Salon of 1859, for instance, with a stark wall on which hang only Manet's Velázquez pastiche "The Dead Christ and the Angels" and Cézanne's still unassimilable "Mary Magdalen," a picture that achieves the kind of low-rent pathos that the Blue Period Picasso tried and failed to find. But Tinterow can bring this kind of drama to the show only by ignoring some of its ostensible point. That first juxtaposition of Manet and Cézanne is followed by two others—by Manet's "Still Life with Melon and Peaches" hanging alongside Cézanne's "The Black Clock," and, later, by Cézanne's portrait of his father hanging alongside Manet's of Zola. These doublings are an education in looking, but, as dialogues between the greatest painter of the time just before Impressionism and the greatest painter of the time just after, they don't have much to do with the origins of Impressionism itself.

That story is told in the exhibition through a series of rooms devoted to the genres of the eighteen-sixties: "The Nude," "Still Life," "History Painting," "The Realist Landscape," "Figures in a Landscape," "Portraits and Figures," all leading up to the culminating "The Impressionist Landscape" and "Modern Life." The idea is that the interaction of these genres can help explain the making of a new style in painting. But the categories are too vague and too much a part of the general inheritance of representational painting to be of much use in explaining Impressionism. (The genres are not even peculiar to French painting of the nineteenth century. With the exception of "The Impressionist Landscape," Rembrandt essentially employed them all.) Nonetheless, a coherent story gets told, mostly within the sections devoted to "The Nude" and to "The Realist Landscape." The exhibition argues, in effect, that in France in the eighteen-sixties, before Impressionism proper appeared, there were already two vital realisms: a small realism, of the Barbizon School and Corot—a Shady Nook kind of realism, devoted to small truths about the particular light in particular places—and a grand realism, derived from Courbet and devoted to rivalling the Old Masters on a new basis, kicking over the traces, and generally raising hell. The crucible in which these two realisms got melded was the mind of Manet, who used the manner of the small realism to serve the interests of the larger one, by painting ambitious anti-academic nudes and "story" pictures—most notably the "Olympia" and the "Déjeuner sur l'Herbe" (neither of which, sadly, made the trip from Paris)—in a newly free and lightsome manner. It was, the show suggests, this hybrid-realist foundation that was the real basis of Impressionism: Manet constructed the scaffolding from which Monet and Renoir could see the light.

Gustave Courbet, who has nine mostly first-rate pictures in the show, obviously has to play a big role in this account, since he was the crucial, heroic realist before Impressionism. Combining the spirit of Walt Whitman with the appetite of Al Goldstein, Courbet was by 1859 the mad old man of the French avant-garde: he had in the previous decade almost singlehandedly ended the tradition of the artist as flunky which had been the painter's lot since the end of the Renaissance. But Courbet's was a high-profile style—like Whitman's, the style of a populist romantic—and a break with Courbet's particular kind of palette-knife, painterly rhetoric was a precondition for what the next generation wanted to do.

One of the best things in the show is a series of calls and responses between Courbet and Manet. Courbet had found Manet's 1863 "Olympia" too pursed and remote and asexual to count as real avant-garde painting, and so he painted an "answer": his "Woman with a Parrot"—a Rubensian nude, in heat, with a bird. Manet's response to the response, his "Young Woman in 1866," is an old Met favorite. But here it emerges for the first time in its proper role, as one of the great rejoinders in the history of wit. In reply

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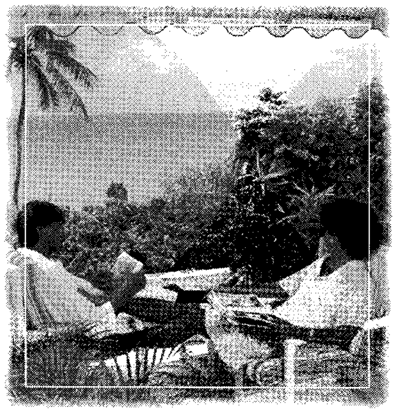

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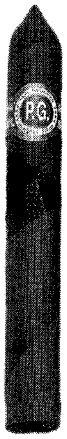

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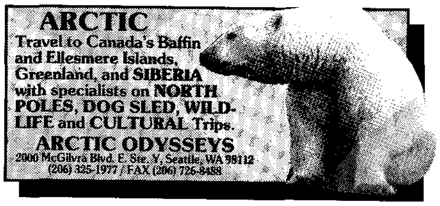

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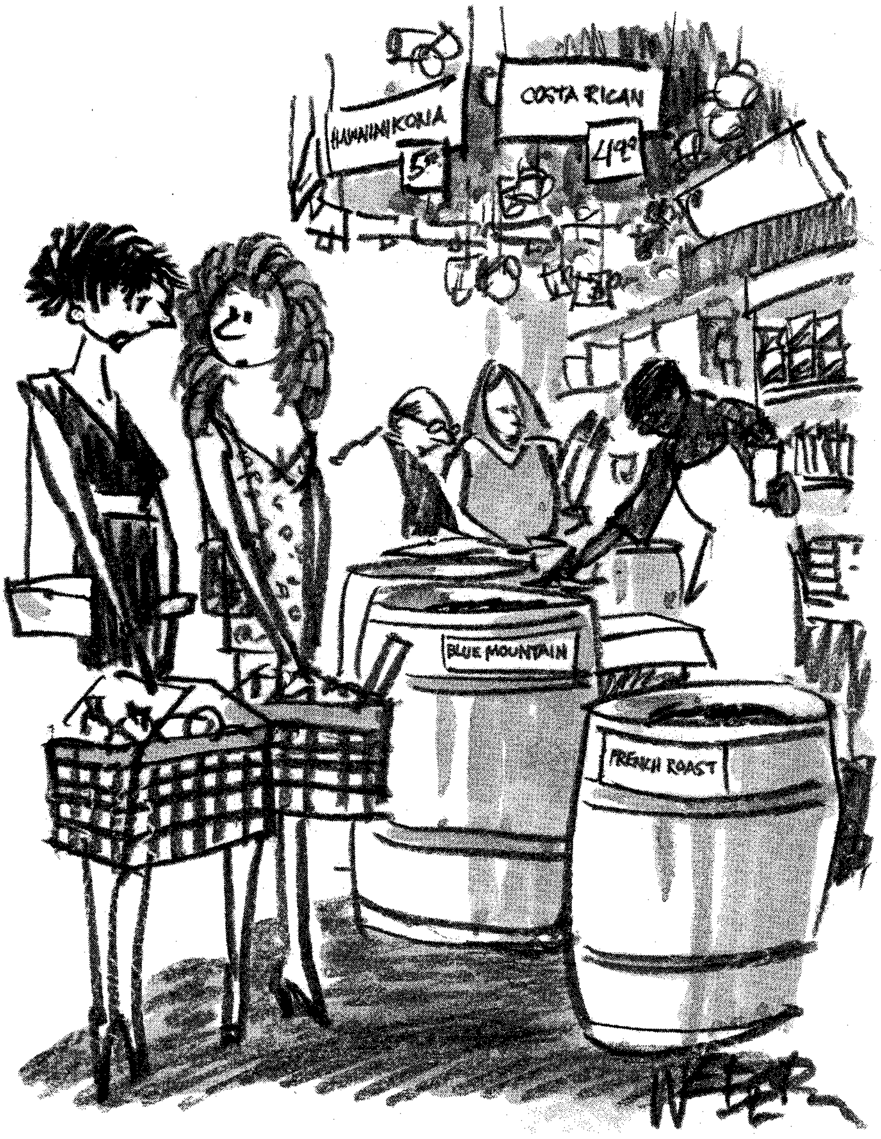
to Courbet's writhing hot momma, Manet's is the type of a high-strung French model—almost bodiless, draped from throat to toe like an Islamic wife, with a small, nervous parrot beside her on a perch—and all the sensuality is compressed into a tiny, improbably lolling partly peeled orange, vivid and creamy and intense, at the bottom right. In a single picture, a cool style has killed off a hot one as surely as Roy Lichtenstein's frozen cartoon brushstroke killed off Action painting.

Yet if Courbet was of no use to the new painting as a grand realist, he was, the exhibition demonstrates, of surprising value as a particularizer. In his landscape painting Courbet had perfect pitch for a kind of unorthodox, antipicturesque clarity, and an amazing grasp of the drama of empty space—he had the ability to make a picture charge dramatically out of a background instead of spreading itself lazily across a proscenium. The show demonstrates that it was this almost photo-realist intensity—more than the orthodox muddy realism of the Barbizon painters Rousseau and Daubigny—that formed the early style of Monet. Monet's mature fogginess, one realizes, is an abstraction based on the clarity of Courbet, rather than on the mere vagueness of Corot.

These kinds of connections are well made throughout the show; its emphasis on the slow, piece-by-piece dialogue between painters suggests the small gravitational tugs within a new movement in art. Part of the new painting did evolve organically from the old, and that part is done justice here. The freedom of Delacroix, the sea skies of Jongkind, the mistiness of Whistler, and the homeliness of



"I'm in love with a married man who—just my luck—is in love with a married man."

Rousseau—each of these influences is shown, and each little pressure on the emerging style is registered.

Again and again, throughout these rooms, one painter emerges as the heroic figure. If the show has a single achievement, it is to remind us once more of the greatness of Manet. Not long ago, Manet was still an ambiguous, even a puzzling, figure in the making of modern art. He was famously the only begetter, but he had a kind of timidity and stylistic irresolution that seemed all wrong for a revolutionary. There was also something puzzling in the official line we were taught to parrot about him. We were told that he shocked the bourgeoisie by showing them a nude woman at an actual picnic, but this was unconvincing, since the bourgeoisie seemed to like pictures of nude women doing everything else (picking up water jugs, sitting and looking out seductively), and, besides, Manet's picnic looked no more like an actual picnic than Ingres's nude women looked like real nude women. More recently, Manet has become a central subject for the social history of art, and his pictures have been scoured for political allegory, gender fables, and tales of class warfare.

To see Manet "in context," though, as one does in this show—it includes twenty-odd Manets, spread out through the genre rooms—is a blessing, almost more than the last decade's retrospectives, since it reminds you of how much better he always was than his contexts. Manet was a man of sharp intellectual sympathies, but at the end of the Commune of Paris he insisted that his one consolation was that artists were not politicians. Of course, his pictures have an ideological content, but it is enclosed within the structure of the paint and the pressure of his emotion, rather than encoded in a hidden allegory. Manet was the Giotto of modernity, the man who invented not just its repertoire of effects but its whole system of effects: the deliberate awkwardness; the aristocratic disdain for what he called "bric-a-brac"; the essentially conservative and haut-bourgeois value placed on the right tone, the right touch at the right moment; the openness to experiment and the readiness to learn from the young; the quiet, ironic detachment balanced and leavened by an absolute integrity about art itself. It was Manet alone, one sees, who broke with the sonorous, embattled avant-gardism

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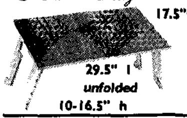

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of Courbet and Baudelaire and replaced it with a new avant-gardism of worldliness and assurance. Manet saw that, since the artist was disinherited anyway, it was better to play the part of a dislodged aristocrat than that of a dismayed bohemian. And then how beautifully and how fully he sings the world he sees: Zola's pants, in Manet's portrait of him—a cream-and-gray rush of fabric—are, all by themselves, a complete statement of the romance of dandyism. (One has only to compare Zola's pants with the pants worn by the gentleman in the Degas portrait that hangs just to the right—they're the same pants, or the same kind—to see why Manet began an entirely new century in art, while Degas remained the great onlooker: the difference in intensity defines the difference between a poetic, generative temperament and an analytic, retrospective one.)

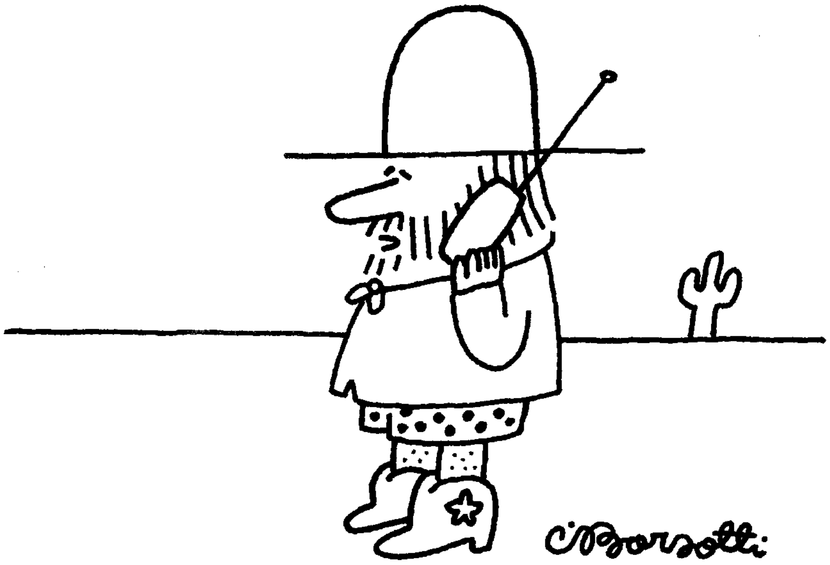
The premise of the show, though, is that all this grounding, in the genres of the time, in the genius of Manet, and in his reimagining of realism, will make the legendary genesis moment of Impressionism—the open-air painting that Monet and Renoir began side by side at the little petit-bourgeois bathing pond of La Grenouillère in 1869—seem more "logical," even inevitable. Monet's two Grenouillère sketches (his finished painting of that scene is lost) and Renoir's two oils on canvas are hung together, for the first time since they were painted, and they are the climax of the show. And yet the manner of those paintings, with their broken yet strangely regular patterning of hot-colored brush marks—registering, in a quivering sweep, bathers and water and sunshine alike—looks as unprepared for as ever. "The Impressionist Landscape," rather than being the product of the equations diagrammed in the previous rooms, looks like one more problem tacked on.

This is because the central "issue" of Impressionism has nothing much to do with the hybridization of genres which preoccupies historians, and is really simpler and more profound: What made Renoir and Monet paint so brightly? Nothing in the earlier realisms—nothing even in Manet—anticipates the childlike clarity of the bright, unmodulated red of a woman's receding flounce in Monet's sketches. Everybody had been painting with light, and everybody liked outdoor scenes; there was nothing new in that. But the taboo against high-keyed color had been so absolute in Western painting for so long that it affected even the most revolutionary of the earlier realists.

In the catalogue, Gary Tinterow attempts to explain the Impressionist liberation of color through the oddly old-fashioned notion that it was due to the influence of Japanese prints. But Japanese prints, though they're more high-keyed than some Western painting, tend to work in big blocks of pure color, rather than in prismatic areas of small juxtapositions, as Monet and Renoir did. And in fact you could get pretty much anything you wanted out of Japanese prints, from the silvery monochromes of Whistler to the reed drawing of van Gogh. They served best as a license to do what you were going to do anyway.

The Grenouillère paintings in the show suggest both a small-scale, technical explanation for the new color and a large-scale, social one. The local explanation involves the "feedback" mechanism that sets in when two artists are in competition side by side, and taboos get broken through the simple play of sibling rivalry. It was Paul McCartney, I think, who once talked about the crucial role of "decibel creep" in the history of rock music: the Beatles would turn their amplifiers up one more notch, because the Stones had turned theirs up the night before, and before you knew it, they were playing "Helter Skelter" and the Stones were playing "Gimme Shelter." This kind of decibel creep, in color rather than in sound, is manifestly at work in the paintings of Renoir and Monet. Each gets brighter as the other does; and, as each one sees that the loss of full-bodied form doesn't mean losing legibility, each takes courage from the other to treat as music what would previously have seemed mere noise.

The more impersonal, social force at work in the invention of Impressionism was something uniquely French: an uncompromising bourgeois anticlericalism that is not at all puritanical. In every other European nation, some residual, scratching sense of the religious obligations of art lingered on—even the aesthetes in England, such as Burne-Jones, had a primarily spiritual view of art—and in every other European nation Impressionism, once it arrived as a style, became virtuous, even pious. But the Enlightenment in France had happened without an intervening Protestantism, which meant that



"I'd like to report some bad guys."

• •

a purely material and antispiritual art could be practiced without the intercession of guilt. (And, for that matter, without the visual sign of guilt, which is good taste.)

There is no politely deferred religious passion in Impressionism proper; in fact, one of the striking things about all the Impressionists is that their resolute unspirituality lasted right to their deathbeds. There are no spiritual incantations, no last-minute conversions—nothing but pictures and pleasures from beginning to end. Impressionism is materialism without a guilty conscience, without guilt of any kind. The only overt reference to Christian feeling that one can find in the mature Manet is his reference to wanting a portrait of Antonin Proust to look Christlike. But then look at the picture—a charming and grave man of fashion, Swann on his way to make calls. This is not sublimation but substitution—not Christianity in modern dress but modern dress having to do all the emotional work of Christian painting. Within academic circles, the taboo against high-keyed color had always rested on the objection not that color gave no pleasure but that it gave too much. The achievement of Monet and Renoir at La Grenouillère was to issue realism a license for regression. Pleasure could be painted as pleasure.

We are so exhausted by Impressionist shows that the presence of one more—especially one like this, which is, despite its billing, a little short on actual Impressionism—will probably be the occasion for a lot of grousing. It has become fashionable to mock the audience that comes for one more Impressionist show, and also to mock the museums that put the shows on. This seems to me a peculiarly charmless form of snobbery. As Cyril Connolly wrote long ago, "the myth of bourgeois pleasure" in Impressionist painting is one of the few living myths that the last two hundred years have produced. What is remarkable is how organic and alive that imagery remains. Of all the attempts launched in the nineteenth century to find a substitute religion for modern people—from Matthew Arnold's "culture" to Flaubert's monasticism of the mot juste—it turns out that the record of the light on the little rivers of the Île-de-France was almost the only one that took. I happened to wander through the preview of the "Origins" show on a Monday morning with a set of high-school art-appreciation teachers. Parked in front of the Monet and Renoir Grenouillère pictures, they recited, by rote, a singsong litany of the pictures' differences: "This one is analytical, this one is lyrical. Monet, restless; Renoir, at peace." They had a nice, light irony about the rote nature of what they were doing, recognizing that they already knew by heart what they were seeing for the first time. Whatever the origins of Impressionism, its afterlife, like that of any religion, consists of homilies and apparitions. ♦

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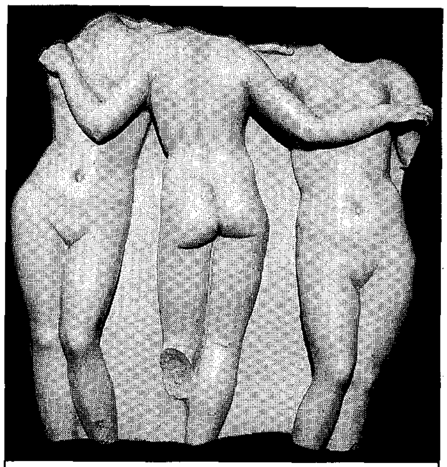

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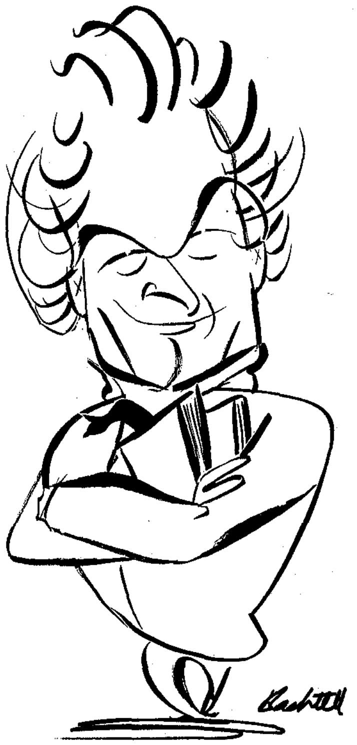
BY CHRISTOPHER BUCKLEY

SEQUELS, it's been said more than once, are not necessarily equals. Doubtless Joseph Heller and his publisher, Michael Korda, made a bet over how many irksome reviewers would scramble to be the first to reach for that chestnut as publication approached for "Closing Time" (Simon & Schuster; $24), which its cover unmistakably proclaims to be "The Sequel to 'Catch-22.' " To call yourself the sequel to one of the most important books of the twentieth century is to lead with a chin the size of Jay Leno's. But then the *New York Review of Books* called "Something Happened" (1974), Heller's novel about a corporate tool who accidentally smothers his son, a failed sequel to "Catch-22," so the poor man is damned if he does and damned if he doesn't. At any rate, it needs quickly to be said that there is some awfully good stuff in the sequel to "Catch-22." Over all—well, as Sonny Liston's manager used to say, "You know, Sonny has a lot of good points. It's his bad points that aren't so good."



Joseph Heller writes a requiem for his generation in "Closing Time."

I say "quickly" because of the piling on that has been under way now for over a month. In August, Barbara Gelb, playing the role of Mme. Defarge, told readers of the *Times Book Review* about Heller's "frequent sulkiness," "gluttonous table manners," and evanescent amiability. More recently, David Streitfeld contributed a piece to *New York*, quoting various literary insiders, including Heller's good friend Kurt Vonnegut, who said that he hadn't read the book, even though he's in it (makes for easier dinner-party seating in the Hamptons); the usual sources within Bookville on how Putnam backed out of its contract with Heller after his novel "Picture This" bombed; another source saying that the asking price for "Closing Time" went into free fall before Dick Snyder, then chairman of Simon & Schuster, reportedly turned it down and Michael Korda, on the principle that S. & S., as the original publisher of "Catch-22," ought to publish the sequel, pushed for it and got it at a sort of bargain-basement price; and Korda himself, denying that his decision to publish "Closing Time" was a payback to Heller's agent, Amanda Urban, for S. & S.'s having finked out of publishing Bret Easton Ellis's unfortunate yuppie serial-murder book, "American Psycho." How would you like to be a seventy-one-year-old certified American literary heavyweight, only to have your latest work be rumored to owe its publication to a Bret Easton Ellis-mollification clause? What praise there was for "Closing Time"—from Robert Gottlieb, the editor of "Catch-22"—was somewhat faint.

So, Joe—glad you wrote "The Sequel to 'Catch-22' "? To such inquiries Heller has patiently replied that birds gotta sing, girls gotta dance, and writers gotta write. The criticism of Heller may be in part a form of backhanded compliment to "Catch-22," which for most readers is Heller's masterpiece. It's as if people were annoyed with him for messing with characters they've come to regard over the years as their own. But if all that "Closing Time" accomplishes is to make people go back and reread "Catch-22," then it will have done something worthwhile. Contemplating "Catch-22" in 1994, as we proceed with God knows what in our occupation of one Caribbean island, makes you wonder if it isn't more relevant now than it was when it came out—in October, 1961, six months after our spectacular decision *not* to try to occupy the island immediately to the left.

"Catch-22" wasn't generally hailed as a masterpiece when it came out. It never hit the *Times* best-seller list. Simon & Schuster says in its publicity material for "Closing Time," though, that "Catch-22" has sold ten million copies "in the United States alone." During the year following its publication, it did sell a respectable forty thousand copies in hardcover. There was a lot of competition: Leon Uris's "Mila 18," which forced a despondent Heller to change his title from "Catch-18" to "Catch-22"; Harold Robbins' "The Carpetbaggers"; Robert Heinlein's "Stranger in a Strange Land"; J. D. Salinger's "Franny and Zooey"; and Ken Kesey's "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest." Most of those forty thousand copies sold in the New York area, and to make the List you have to sell in Peoria, too.

It was probably because of the reviews that Peoria wasn't buying. As Streitfeld noted, the *Times* panned it in three paragraphs on page 50. Poking about the library, I found a few other reviews:

> Mr. Heller's talents for comedy are so considerable that one gets irritated when he keeps pressing. . . . There is a difference, after all, between milking a joke . . . and stretching it out till you kill it.—*The Atlantic.*
>
> Heller's talent is impressive, but it also is undisciplined, sometimes luring him into bogs of boring repetition.—*Time.*
>
> Monotonous.—San Francisco *Chronicle.*
>
> Several extremely funny passages. . . . But the book as a whole is less effective than it might be.—Granville Hicks, in *The Saturday Review.*
>
> He wallows in his own laughter, and finally drowns in it. What remains is a debris of sour jokes, stage anger, dirty words, synthetic looniness, and the sort of antic behavior the children fall into when they know they are losing our attention.—Whitney Balliett, in *The New Yorker.*

The Nation, predictably, did like it. "This novel is not merely the best American novel to come out of World War II," Nelson Algren wrote. "It is the best American novel that has come out of anywhere in years." And Robert Brustein, of *The New Republic*, was beside himself: "Joseph Heller is one of the most extraordinary talents now among us. He has Mailer's combustible radicalism without his passion for violence and self-glorification . . . and he has Salinger's wit without his coquettish self-consciousness."

All told, it seems miraculous that the book went on to sell nine million nine hundred and sixty thousand copies in softcover, and that the title went on to enter the language in a way that no other book title has. How often have you uttered the phrase, usually after a run-in with the Department of Motor Vehicles? Thirteen years after its publication, Nixon's attorney James St. Clair used it while manfully arguing his client's sinking case before the Supreme Court, explaining that you can impeach a President only if you have evidence that he committed a crime, and you can't collect criminal evidence against a President. One of the Justices, Heller observed with amusement in a 1975 interview with *Playboy*, placed himself in the role of Yossarian, telling Mr. St. Clair, "Wait a minute, you lose me there."

"Catch-22" would almost certainly never have entered the language, or even come out in paperback, if an interviewer for the New York *Herald Tribune*, which had done its part to insure the book's demise, hadn't chanced to ask S. J. Perelman if he'd read any good books lately. He replied, " 'Catch-22.' " The rest is history, and prologue to "Closing Time."

FOR all its flaws, "Closing Time" is a summing up by one of the last of the great writers of the Second World War generation. James Jones and Irwin Shaw are dead, Kurt Vonnegut seems to have had his say, and, with Norman Mailer off in Minsk channelling the ghost of Lee Harvey Oswald and doing P.R. for Madonna in *Esquire*, it appears Heller still owns the field that in 1961

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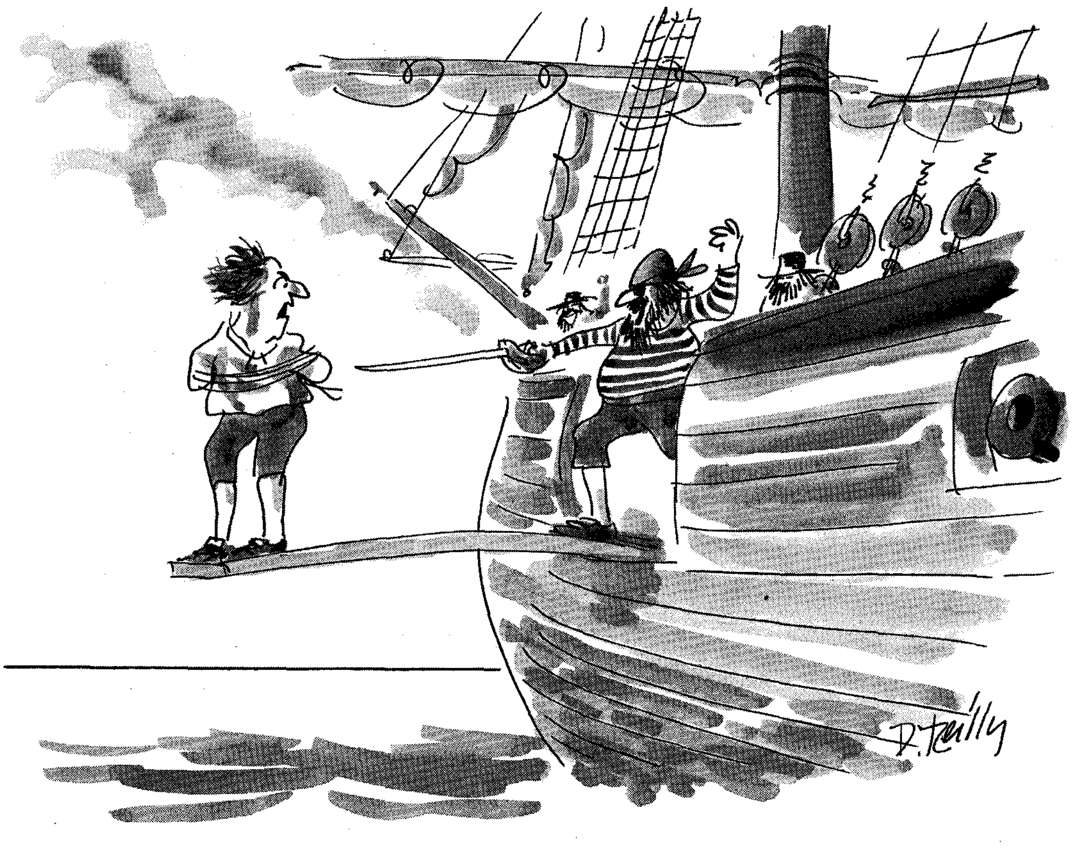

"What are you, anyway—an only child?"

• •

became preëminently his. The opening sentence of "Closing Time"—quite a switch from "Catch-22" 's breezy "It was love at first sight"—is elegiac. The novel's protagonist, an aging veteran named Sammy Singer, who was not a character in the prequel, begins, "When people our age speak of the war, it is not of Vietnam but of the one that broke out more than half a century ago and swept in almost all the world."

Though many of the best parts of the book are about Sammy's—and his buddies'—experience of the war, "Closing Time" isn't "about" the Second World War. It's Heller's "The Best Years of Our Lives." It's about the End, the Apocalypse—whether by Alzheimer's or stroke or cancer or by New York City bus terminal. It's about growing up in Coney Island before the war. Large chunks are devoted to *où sont les bumper cars d'antan* evocations of the Steeplechase amusement park there, the old neighborhood, and how everything changed after the war. It's sort of Proustian, with bagels instead of madeleines. "I suppose," Heller told Ms. Gelb, "this is the first time I've written seriously about Jewish characters." They're certainly more real than the *oy gevalt* caricatures he wrote about in "Good as Gold."

Sammy is a good man, who, after serving with Yossarian and the others in the "fighting" 256th Squadron on the island of Pianosa, off Elba, went on to become a promotional copywriter at *Time*. (Heller did the same.) The war really *did* change things: "In his work in the city Sammy found himself among Republicans for the first time." His life, like Prufrock's, has been measured out in coffee spoons of disappointment, along with some larger spoonfuls, in the form of his wife's death from cancer and his son's suicide. (Heller has named no fewer than three of the main characters' sons Michael, not an especially reader-friendly device.)

Sammy's relationship with Lew Rabinowitz, his old friend from Coney Island, is the emotional heart of the novel, and it has touching depth. Heller, up to his usual structural tricks, gives both Sammy and Lew a narrator's "I"; again, he can't be accused of making it easy, but then he never has ("Catch-22" has sixty characters). The chapters in Sammy's voice are the best parts of "Closing Time," perhaps because, despite Heller's asseverations to Ms. Gelb that "this is not autobiography," they read like autobiography, and of a very high order.

Sammy is not a funny man. There isn't much for him to be funny about, not at this point in the game: "I enjoy myself a lot, playing bridge, taking adult education courses and subscribing to concerts at Lincoln Center and the YMHA . . . doing my direct-mail consulting work for cancer relief. But I am only marking time. Unlike Yossarian, I expect nothing much new and good to happen to me again." No one in "Closing Time" has much to look forward to, except perhaps for some good morphine on the way out with the cancer. All the main characters are in their sixties and seventies. Heller has shaved ten years off Yossarian; what the hell, as McWatt used to say in "Catch-22" as he turned back to make another bomb run. Everyone is in and out of hospitals, hallucinating (another big help for the confused reader, who will suddenly find Yossarian conversing with Ulysses S. Grant), gradually deteriorating, and generally, as Sammy said, marking time. Back on Pianosa, Yossarian "had decided to live forever or die in the attempt." "Closing Time" is what he got for living forever.

Yossarian was the appealing Everyman-Sisyphus of "Catch-22," the one reasonably sane guy in the loony bin. He's lost a lot of that appeal in the fifty years since. For one thing, he has bought into the loony bin, as Milo Minderbinder's partner, and is now a wealthy businessman, twice divorced, worried about his son, and horny for his nurse.

For his part, Milo, a former mess sergeant who makes Gordon Gekko look like an amateur, has done well for himself as a—surprise—billionaire arms dealer. Our last glimpse of Milo had him abandoning a desperate Yossarian on the streets of Rome in order to run off so he could get in on the illegal tobacco market. He is his old, incorrigible self as he connives to get the United States military to buy his superstealthy bomber—called the Shhhhh!—which flies faster than the speed of light. As he puts it, "you can bomb someone before you even decide to do it." His competition is one Harold—ahem—Strangelove, who's pushing his own version of a post-Stealth bomber. Milo has gone on to become exactly what his "Catch-22" class yearbook would have predicted for him: Most Likely to Prove Lenin Right.

Ex-Pfc. Wintergreen, who kept going AWOL in the old days, and ran the United States Air Force by his deft sabotaging of the paper flow through the squadron's mailroom, is back as well. He's still his foulmouthed self—all the more so since it's 1994, and "fuck" is just another punctuation mark. (I couldn't find a single "fuck" in "Catch-22." Heller substitutes "furgle," and the Italian whores beckon the boys with "Ficky-fick?" Of course, in 1961 Madonna was still the Mother of Christ.)

And this wouldn't be much of a sequel without Chaplain Tappman, the hapless Anabaptist padre ("It isn't necessary to call me Father"), whose duty it was to censor the squadron's mail home. (Lending a hand, Yossarian blacked out all the words except "a," "an," and "the" in one of his letters, and, in another, blacked out all but the greeting and wrote at the bottom, "I yearn for you tragically. A. T. Tappman, Chaplain, U. S. Army.") The Chaplain has since developed a rather peculiar malady: he urinates heavy water, the kind that's used to make nuclear bombs. The government, as indifferent and intractable as it was during the war, abducts him for obscure reasons of national security, and Yossarian, putting his shoulder to the Sisyphean rock once again, can't get a straight answer as to his whereabouts. The Catch-22 of the nineteen-nineties, it turns out, is the Freedom of Information Act—or, as Chaplain Tappman explains it, "a federal regulation obliging government agencies to release all information they had to anyone who made application for it, except information they had that they did not want to release." This will delight anyone who has ever filed an F.O.I.A. request with Big Brother Sam, only to get back, months later, a phonebook-size thicket of papers with all the words blacked out except "a," "an," and "the." This is classic Catch-22, with its Möbius-strip impenetrability—the logic and the excuse of the totalitarian mind-set.

THE only problem is that the totalitarians running the show in "Closing Time" don't have the bite—or, ultimately, the menace—of the colonels in "Catch-22." Of course, there's no war going on in "Closing Time," other than the video games being played in the Oval Office. These totalitarian heavies start out ludicrous and end up ludicrous, even after they've triggered the missiles. Apocalypse is as Apocalypse does, and this one comes off as a Potemkin Armageddon, perhaps because by this time the reader has been force-marched through so many of Yossarian's hallucinations that you really can't tell what (the fuck) is going on, and whether the apocalypse is real or not. If it is a real one it's pretty feckless, with the horsemen riding on carrousel steeds. So what's to be afraid of? The real horrors of "Closing Time" lie elsewhere—in the quotidian, Leopold Bloom-like defeats and attritions.

Heller's Washington, D.C., where the carrousel horses are stabled, along with a perfect Dan Quaylean Vice-President, is funnier and more sophisticated than the one in "Good as Gold," but it's still not his most successful locus comicus. The crowning glory is Heller's depiction of the Port Authority Bus Terminal, on his home turf of New York. Anyone who has had the pleasure of passing through there will recognize this appalling agora of villainy as the genuine article. This is the book's ground zero, and the place toward which Yossarian is ineluctably drawn. (Go figure.) Amusingly, Heller told Ms. Gelb that he himself has set foot in Port Authority only once, and that was a long time ago, before it became the worm in the apple that it is today. He hired "a very good researcher" to supply him with the details, but, in spite of this, the

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setting did not lose anything Dickensian in the wordprocessing:

> There was scarcely a charmed body with enough living space to be free of another body more dissipated and fetid tumbled against it. People squabbled. There were shouts, quarrels, stabbings, burns, sex, drugs, drinking, and breaking glass; by morning there were casualties and an accumulation of filth of all sorts save industrial waste. There was no water or toilet. Garbage was not collected until morning, when the locals roused and took themselves to the sinks and the toilets in the rest rooms in sanitary preparation for the day's work ahead and, despite posted bans, to bathe and do laundry in the washbasins. . . . The astringent smell of caustic disinfectant hung ineradicably in the air like the carbolic harbinger of a remorseless decay.

Yuck! Or, as Yossarian ruminated while searching for Nately's whore's kid sister in the nocturnal squalor of Rome, "What a lousy earth!" He is drawn to Port Authority initially to rescue his son from arrest for turnstile jumping, and repeatedly afterward because of the intriguing, infernal (as in Dante) network of secret tunnels underneath it, and finally because Milo plans to hold his own son's extravagant wedding there, with the President as best man. Yossarian's wanderings below are scarcely less gruesome than his peregrinations through whorish Rome:

> "I'll do you for a nickel, mister," said a flat-chested girl . . . while a stout woman with painted lids and rouged cheeks and dimpled faces of fat around the chubby knees exposed by her tight skirt looked on from ahead, laughing to herself.
>
> "I'll lick your balls," the woman proposed while Yossarian walked by, and rolled her eyes coquettishly. "We can do it in the emergency stairwell."
>
> Now he tensed with outrage. I am sixty-eight, he said to himself. What was there about him that gave these people the notion he had come to the terminal to be done or have his balls licked?

Only a pro like Heller could pull off such simultaneous horror and humor. This is the same affronted voice that kept asking in "Catch-22," with vanquishing naïveté, why everyone was trying to kill him. The gloriously vulgar wedding that eventually takes place in this unlikeliest of connubial bowers—thirty-five hundred guests, four thousand pounds of caviar, a million champagne tulips, a forty-four-foot-high wedding cake, and Secret Service agents posing as rigidly as George Segal statues—is out of Nathanael West by way of Tom Wolfe.

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It's hard, in the end, not to read "Closing Time" as a commentary on "Catch-22." Heller's style has deepened and matured—to use a presumptuous word. He flew more than sixty bombing missions in the Second World War himself, and since writing "Catch-22" he has looked the Grim Reaper in the eye again, in the form of Guillain-Barré syndrome. He has paid full price for the gravitas on these pages, and the melancholy. The problem with gravitas, as anyone who's trudged through Russian Lit. will tell you, is that it enables a fair bit of prolixity. Heller *is* prolix and he *is* repetitious. He goes back to the same wells too many times, and there isn't much in the way of a plot. But then, just as your patience is about to give out (let's be honest—just as you're about to put the book down), there will be a glimmery gem, often comic: "Mr. Tilyou always kept at hand a shiny new dime to give to Mr. Rockefeller, who . . . came begging almost daily in his repentant struggle to collect back all those shiny new dimes he had handed away in a misguided effort to buy public affection, which he now understood he never had needed." There are enough of these to justify the price of admission to "Closing Time," and the occasional long standing in line for the rides. And, finally, there's this sort of startling realization: that Heller is at his best, which is as good as it gets, when he's *not* trying to be funny.

Toward the end of "Closing Time," with the cosmic gloaming setting in, the missiles warming in their silos, and the caterers preparing the wedding feast, you can hear the still, sad music of Heller's humanity as Yossarian wanders through the heart of darkness underneath Port Authority and learns that the ur-G.I. of the Second World War generation is gone:

> Kilroy was dead, McBride revealed. "I felt I should tell you."
>
> "I had a feeling he was," said Yossarian. "There are people my age who'll be sorry to hear that. Vietnam?"
>
> "Oh, no, no," McBride answered with surprise. "It was cancer."

It's Yossarian as Marlow, being told, "Mistah Kilroy—he dead"; this is Heller's requiem for his generation.

When Heller does try to be funny, he's Sonny Liston in full swing—and, if nothing else, it reminds you of the moment when postmodern absurdist comedy was born. Even the book's critics conceded that "Catch-22" had some of the funniest moments in fiction. Remember Chief White Halfoat, the swarthy Indian from Oklahoma, who, "for occult reasons of his own, had made up his mind to die of pneumonia"? And Captain Flume, who lived in mortal fear of Chief White Halfoat?

> Captain Flume was obsessed with the idea that Chief White Halfoat would tiptoe up to his cot one night when he was sound asleep and slit his throat open for him from ear to ear. Captain Flume had obtained this idea from Chief White Halfoat himself, who did tiptoe up to his cot one night as he was dozing off, to hiss portentously that one night when he, Captain Flume, was sound asleep he, Chief White Halfoat, was going to slit his throat open from ear to ear. Captain Flume turned to ice, his eyes, flung open wide, staring directly up into Chief White Halfoat's, glinting drunkenly only inches away.
>
> "Why?" Captain Flume managed to croak finally.
>
> "Why not?" was Chief White Halfoat's answer.

I was truly mystified to find Heller saying, in that old *Playboy* interview, "I wasn't aware that 'Catch-22' was a *funny* book until I heard someone laugh while reading it. The experience was pleasant but also unsettling. . . . I'm suspicious of comedy." Trying to resolve this koan, I wondered if Heller isn't a Janus figure of American fiction—one face to the darkness, staring it down, the other blinking into the sun. Something else he said in that interview steers you in this direction: "I'm inclined to be serious about most matters, yet jokes keep coming to my mind. This disturbs me." Why? "Because humor comes too easily, and I'm suspicious of things that come too easily."

There's much in "Closing Time" that can't have come easily. As the critics sharpen their knives and aim for the dotted lines marked "Cut here," it seems we can afford to celebrate "Catch-22" 's thirty-third anniversary by welcoming Yossarian, Sammy, Milo, Lew, Wintergreen, and Chaplain Tappman, even as we take leave of them, and give credit to their creator, who has given us such consequential imperfections, and has dared not to leave well enough alone. ♦

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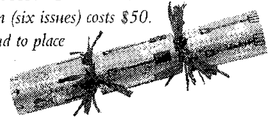

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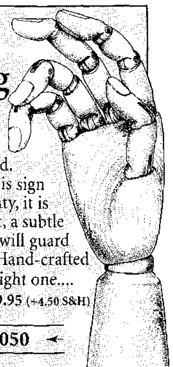

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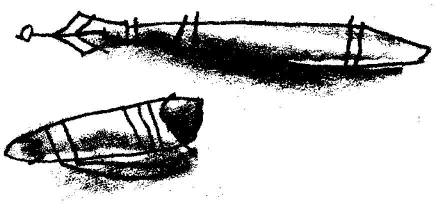

BOOKS BRIEFLY NOTED

FICTION

Who Will Run the Frog Hospital?

by Lorrie Moore
(Knopf; $20)

ALMOST without exception, Moore's narrators have comic yet dark stories to tell: they fire off crisp, De Vriesian one-liners and then, when you least expect it, sneak in wrenching revelations. Berie Carr, the narrator of Moore's second novel, is a middle-aged woman recalling her adolescence in Horsehearts, a townlet in upstate New York where the residents consider Albany "glamorous, forbidding." At fifteen, she works as a ticket vender at the Storyland amusement park, where her gorgeous best friend, Silsby Chaussée, plays Cinderella. Generally ignored by their parents, Berie and Sils become inseparable, sharing everything from loud, delirious adolescent humor to self-prepared meals of raw potatoes, oleo, and salt. When Sils gets pregnant, Berie devises a scam to extract the abortion money from the amusement park. Amid these sprawling recollections, Berie describes a Paris vacation in the present, with her husband, Daniel Hiawatha Bergman, a not so gentle soul who attempts to hide behind his glibness. The Paris scenes are nothing short of heart-stopping—but they are also the adhesive of the novel, binding the optimistic memories of a girl to the pain and resigned patience of an adult. (A portion of this book appeared in *The New Yorker*.)

The Bird Artist

by Howard Norman
(Farrar, Straus & Giroux; $20)

NORMAN'S second novel unfolds just after the turn of the century, in Witless Bay, Newfoundland, a small fishing village perched on the edge of the world; mail from Halifax can take months to arrive, and a constable, when needed, must be borrowed from a neighboring town. The novel's quiet and self-contained narrator, Fabian Vas, has lived there all his life. He introduces himself as a dedicated illustrator of birds, then hastens to add, "Yet I murdered the lighthouse keeper, Botho August, and that is an equal part of how I think of myself." Although this defining act of violence is the novel's ostensible subject, to tell his own story Fabian must relate the recent history of his community as well: a drowning in the bay; a strained Thanksgiving gathering; an incriminatingly fancy pair of stockings purchased at the general store. But these anecdotes don't resolve into any easy understanding of the tragedies they foreshadow. The novel, like the people who inhabit it, refuses to yield up its essential mysteriousness; it stays with you, resolutely unpretentious yet humbling, like a pebble in your shoe.

MEMOIRS

A Journey Through Economic Time: A Firsthand View

by John Kenneth Galbraith
(Houghton Mifflin; $24.95)

THE distinguished economist, who was born in Canada in 1908, here recalls what he has learned about economics in his lifetime. Some developments he only studied, like the disastrous effects of the Versailles Treaty's reparation demands, while others he helped to shape, like this country's price-control system during the Second World War. Galbraith isn't trying to show how influential he has been; he's seeking to point out economic lessons that we've learned in the course of this century, and to remind us of lessons that we should have learned but didn't. For example, Americans apparently forgot many of the follies that led to the 1929 crash, and in the nineteen-eighties, in the name of free markets, indulged in another round of frenzied finance, which duly bequeathed bankruptcies, bailouts, and recession. Galbraith's tart, witty prose never quite conceals his compassion, and behind his rational arguments—for example, that highly unequal distribution of income causes economic stagnation—one senses an abiding humaneness.

Black Fire: The Making of an American Revolutionary
by Nelson Peery
(New Press; $22.95)

THIS is Peery's enormously instructive memoir of his youth. Peery was raised during the Depression, first in Wabasha, Minnesota, where his was the only African-American family, and then in Minneapolis, where, despite a vague atmosphere of liberalism, blacks suffered from racism as much as they did in the Deep South. After the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, Peery enlisted in the Army and was assigned to an all-black division. He quickly became one of several organizers of a sustained and often violent struggle to fight racism in the military—a struggle that was fought as much in simple self-defense as it was on principle. To read Peery's account of his war years is to glimpse the ambivalence and the horror felt by African-American troops at being told that their efforts would help to *preserve* the American way of life—a way of life that included poverty, police oppression, rape, and lynching. It made just as much sense to die fighting official racism at home, Peery concluded, as to die fighting the Japanese in the Philippines. "Black Fire" is a well-told, scathing story, and it resounds with a sense of justice.

True North
by Jill Ker Conway
(Knopf; $23)

READERS of the robust first installment of the historian Jill Ker Conway's autobiography, "The Road from Coorain," which tells of her childhood on a thirty-two-thousand-acre sheep station in New South Wales, will be disappointed by its prim successor. Conway's new memoir begins in graduate school at Harvard in 1960 and takes us through her appointment as the first woman president of Smith College, in 1975. A serious and idealistic woman, Conway earnestly tries to unbend here: she admits to dashing off to Elizabeth Arden for restorative facials and hairdos at stressful junctures; she writes of her romance, "liberally assisted by drink," with a Harvard master eighteen years her senior, and of their happy marriage, despite his terrible bouts of depression; she even confesses to a "near-psychotic" rage at her mother. Nevertheless, her high-mindedness eventually becomes wearisome. Read "The Road from Coorain." ◆

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SHOUTS & MURMURS

GUM

BY SCOTT GUTTERMAN

(*Fade in old-timey fiddle music.*)

Title: "Something Like a Candy"

(*Slow zoom on single shot of eight-year-old boy, in mid-chew.*)

NARRATOR: It started as an idle pursuit: a way to pass the time, to occupy the slackened jaw of street urchin and steel magnate alike. (*Hold on various stills of farmhands, factory workers, men in bowler hats.*) But even in its infancy, when America wakened to its unfurling power like a slumbering giant whose nap had been cut short by the ambulance cry of its own withered soul, when gnashing, nattering demons fought for the very plinth of this great land, when the corn was as high as an elephant's eye—even then it served as a salve to the spirit, a lulling reminder that there would still be a tomorrow, even if tomorrow never came.

FYVUSH FINKEL: I used to take my penny down to the candy store every Friday. This is in New York City, on the Lower East Side, which could be a very rough place back then—not like it's a big picnic basket today—and if you didn't get run over by a pushcart on your way to the store, or beaten up by the Ukrainian gangs over on Cherry Street, which happened about every other day, you'd give your penny to the man behind the counter, and if he wasn't the kind of fellow to rob you blind, which most of them were, you'd get, I don't know, six or seven pieces of candy, and usually in there would be a stick of gum.

(*Hold on shots of tropical foliage, migrant laborers.*)

NARRATOR: The resin of the sapodilla tree was made to yield a chewable substance that could produce a kind of refreshment lasting all the livelong day. Mixed first with lye, then with iodine, and finally with sugar, it soon filled the mouths of schoolboys and stumblebums, of pugilists and prostitutes from Portland, Maine, to Portland, Oregon.

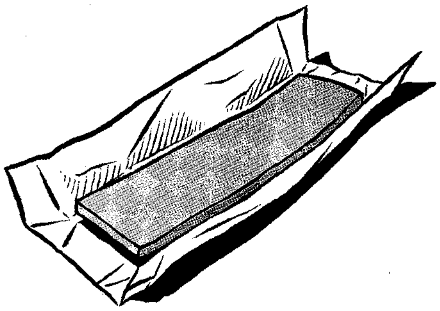
SUSAN SONTAG: You have to understand, gum was very much frowned upon by the rising merchant class, who saw it as a kind of repudiation of all that they had done to distance themselves from their very provincial, very backwoods sorts of backgrounds. So what you had was this tremendous excitement, this wonderful violation of the social code, whenever someone would "pop in a stick," as they'd say. It was all really very exciting, really.

(*Hold on shots of robber-baron types.*)

NARRATOR: With the rise of "gumming" came the gum lords. They were ruthless men: cold, overbearing, quick to anger, bad of breath, unfriendly, rude, and, more often than not, not nice. They would hold the burgeoning gum world by its wrapper for more than three decades. It would be more than thirty years before the world of gum would be loosed from their very sticky and unpleasant grip.

KEANU REEVES: "I intend to build me a gumworks the likes of which has not been seen east of the Mississippi, nor north of the Ohio, nor west of the Allegheny, nor south of Lake Huron. I will set it in the city of Chicago, for that is the place where I live, though not in summer, for it is too blessed hot."—Colonel Harry A. Beech-Nut.

NARRATOR: Men with names like Wrigley, Dentyne, and Bazooka would seek control of what quickly grew to be a multibillion-dollar-a-year industry (*hold on shots of bubble-popping contests, kids at candy counters*) built on the pennies of boys with names like Tommy, Frank, and Ken, and girls with names like Laura, Sandy, and Jo. Day after day, they came to stores with names like Pop's, Morry's, and the Pit Stop, to buy gum with names like Juicy Fruit, Beeman's, and Big Red.



SHELBY FOOTE: The mere fact that you could *chew* gum for so long, that it would last and last and not lose its flavor—although all gum would *eventually* lose its flavor—that fact alone made it a kind of metaphor for all that was regenerative in American life, the sense that you could go away and the place you left would *still be there*, it wouldn't be gone like some vaporous illusion—it was the same with gum, you could go out, bowl a few frames, make a phone call, get back in your car, and you'd still be chewing *the same piece of gum*. That was tremendously important in establishing the whole entire gum mystique, which is to say legend.

MARTIN SCORSESE: Sure, I saw all the gum pictures, uh, all the great, great gum-chewing heroes. Sam Spade, of course, comes to mind. The Thin Man, William Powell, Cool Hand Luke—What? They didn't? Are you sure? It's really very funny, because I always associate them with, uh, with gum.

(*Shots of clouds gathering, sound of thunderclaps.*)

NARRATOR: But a dark cloud hovered on the horizon: a bubble-gum-versus-chewing-gum conflagration that would rend the land asunder. Brother would be set against brother, in what came to be known as the Big Gum War.

(*Station break.*)

ANNOUNCER: The twenty-seven-part television event "Gum" will return in a moment with Part Two: "Bubble Trouble." ♦

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"Some people might think that my new Saab

Convertible is ________. These people are

A. a toy
B. a phase I'm going through
C. a last desperate grab for youth

no doubt ________. The Saab is the most

A. misguided
B. jealous
C. just plain mean

________ car I've ever ________. It has loads

A. versatile
B. versatile
C. versatile

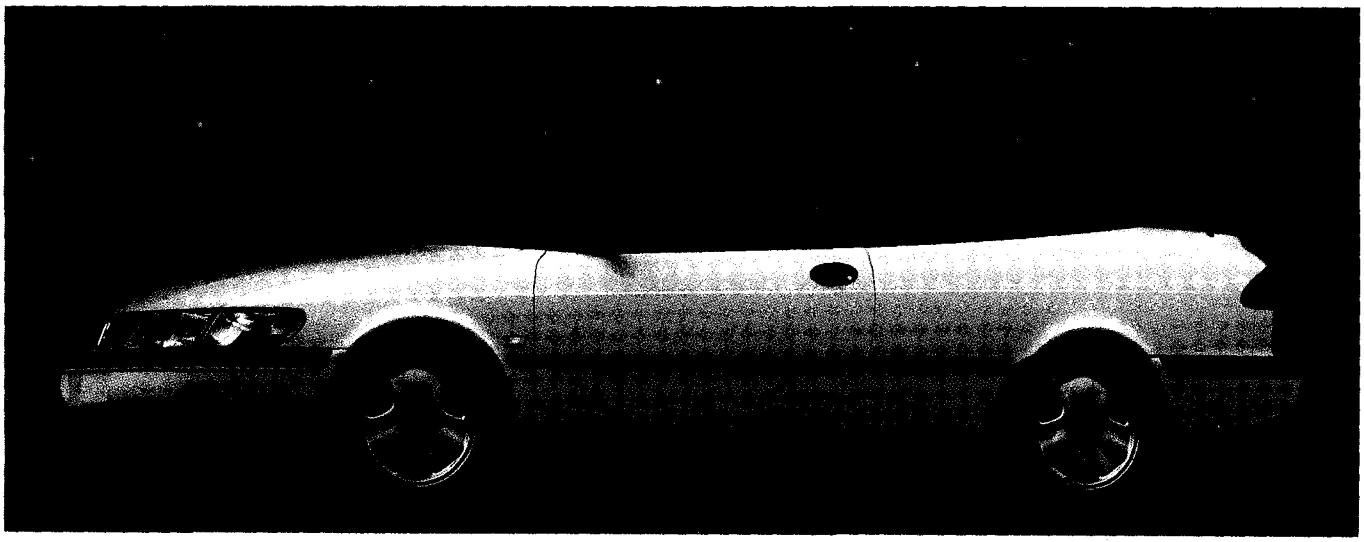
A. owned
B. leased
C. borrowed from my brother-in-law

of ________. Frankly, it never occurred to

A. trunk space
B. passenger room
C. safety features

me that the Saab Convertible is ________."

A. a classic
B. a real head turner
C. the perfect car for a midnight drive sometime in June when the skies are clear and still and the air flows across my skin like warm silk and there's just me and someone I love and a deserted country road spilling out before us



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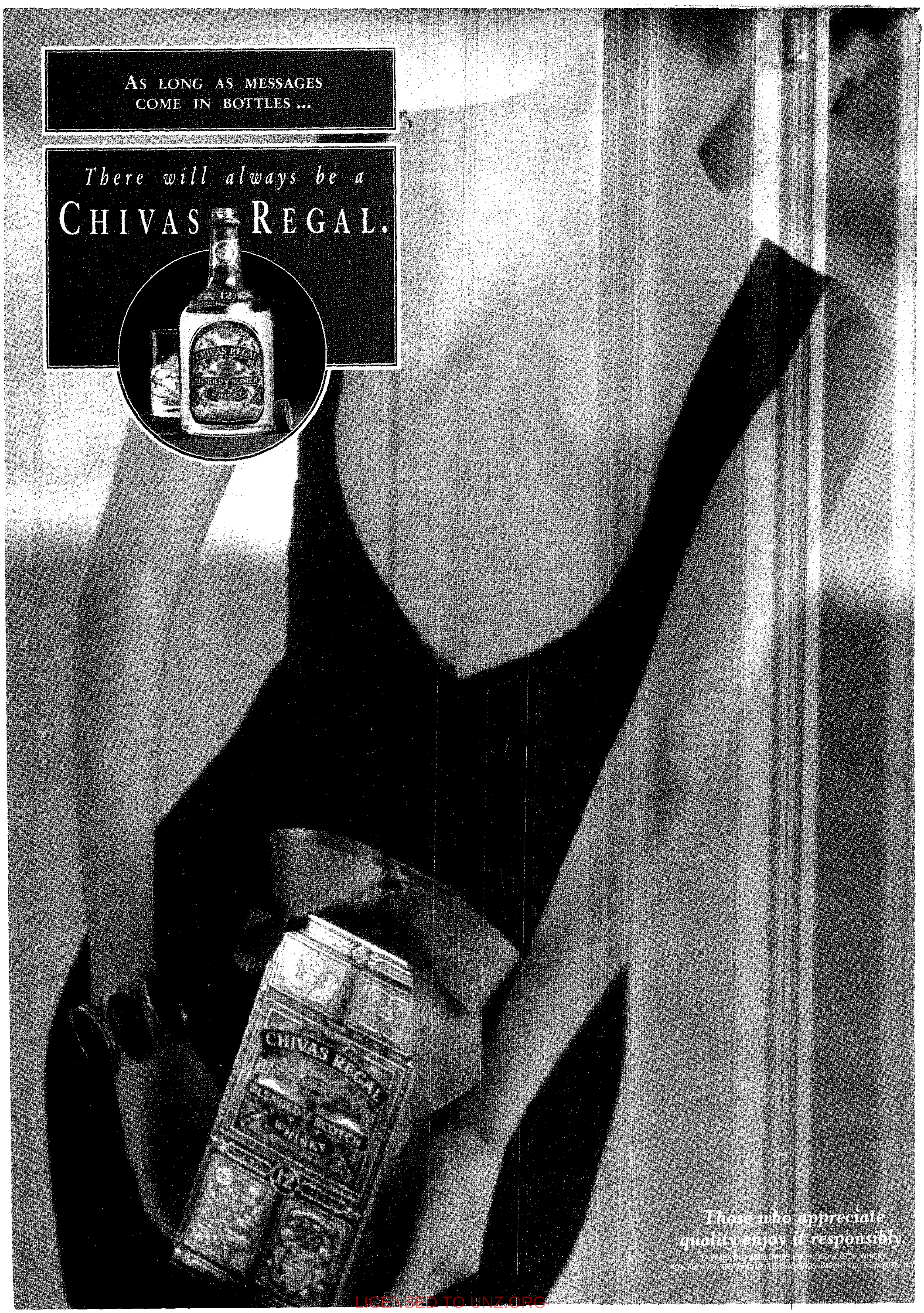
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